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Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund

Report on the first, second and annual sessions of 2007

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Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures.

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Part one
First regular session of 2007

Held at United Nations Headquarters from 16 to 19 and on 22 January 2007

I. Organization of the session

A. Election of officers

1. The Executive Board elected as President H.E. Mr. Javier Loayza Barea (Bolivia), and as Vice-Presidents H.E. Mr. Michel Kafando (Burkina Faso); H.E. Mr. Kyaw Tint Swe (Myanmar); H.E. Mr. Pavle Jevremović (Serbia); and H.E. Mr. Robert Hill (Australia).

B. Opening statements

2. The President said that the recent commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of UNICEF by the General Assembly had shown the concrete results achieved by the organization and the commitment of its staff. UNICEF was the main organization responsible for guaranteeing the rights of the child, and was a reliable ally and partner of Governments. Closing the gap of inequality and reaching out to the marginalized was one of the main challenges facing the world today.

3. The Executive Director reviewed several key developments in 2006, including the August launch of an alliance between the Organization of American States, UNICEF and the Inter-American Development Bank to achieve free and universal birth registration for all children in Latin America and the Caribbean by 2015. Emphasizing the centrality of partnerships, especially relevant in light of the 2006 report of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence, she affirmed that UNICEF remained committed to a strengthened and coherent United Nations system to produce better results for children, guided by the Millennium Development Goals and the Millennium Declaration.

4. The outgoing President, H.E. Mr. Andrei Dapkunias (Belarus), said that during the past year he had been humbled by the work done by UNICEF for the well-being of the world's children. UNICEF was the biggest and best-kept secret of the United Nations, as well as its hope and the promise of its success.

C. Adoption of the agenda

5. The Executive Board adopted the agenda, timetable and organization of work (E/ICEF/2007/1 and Corr.1) for the session.

6. In accordance with rule 50.2 of the rules of procedure, the Secretary of the Executive Board announced that credentials had been submitted by 49 observer delegations, 4 United Nations bodies, 2 intergovernmental organizations, the Standing Group of National Committees for UNICEF, 2 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and 1 other entity.

II. Deliberations of the Executive Board

A. Annual report to the Economic and Social Council

7. The report (E/ICEF/2007/3) was introduced by the Director of United Nations Affairs and External Relations. He also presented a report on the activities of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) that were relevant to UNICEF (E/ICEF/2007/6).

8. A number of delegations commended the annual report, which they found to be analytical, but other delegates asked that future reports be even more analytical in nature and provide information on challenges encountered in carrying out the work of UNICEF, including in the context of United Nations reform. The secretariat took note of requests to provide more information on the relationship with the World Bank, humanitarian response and the funding of operational activities, and to follow the threads of information discussed from one year's report to the next.

9. Several delegations noted the increased focus on achieving results in the context of the Millennium Development Goals, especially given the short time frame for meeting the Goals. Some speakers expressed appreciation for work in the area of knowledge management, including DevInfo.

10. Delegations noted with appreciation the role of UNICEF in various international forums in support of United Nations reform, with some emphasizing the need for UNICEF to be at the lead in implementation of the recommendations of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence. However, others urged UNICEF to move cautiously on the recommendations, as the report must first be presented to the General Assembly. The secretariat said that it was important to bring together the various intergovernmental and inter-agency mechanisms, including the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development, the High-level Panel, and the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), including the High-level Committee on Programmes and the High-level Committee on Management. UNICEF was fully engaged in all of these processes. Addressing concerns raised concerning the involvement of the specialized agencies in the processes, the secretariat said that the CEB fully shared this concern. UNICEF was taking steps to increase its collaboration with those agencies and with the international financial institutions.

11. Concern was raised over the slow pace of work in the area of HIV/AIDS, including slow implementation of the recommendations of the Global Task Team (GTT), and the lack of closer integration of programmes to combat HIV/AIDS. UNICEF and other parts of the United Nations system must work more closely together for maximum effectiveness.

12. A number of delegates encouraged UNICEF to be engaged in the upcoming triennial comprehensive policy review. Some speakers said that UNICEF had a comparative advantage, including its brand and image, that should be retained during the period of United Nations reform. UNICEF was urged to participate fully in the piloting of eight countries for the "One United Nations" process. The secretariat said that national ownership remained a high priority for Member States and United Nations agencies in the review. The funds and programmes, including UNICEF, were engaged

in a number of activities, including the involvement of country and regional offices, to contribute to the report on the implementation of the current triennial policy review.

13. UNICEF was commended by a number of delegations for its leadership, support and activities supporting the preparation of the Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children and encouraged to follow-up on its recommendations.

14. Speakers stressed that UNICEF should work in closer partnership with others, with requests for additional information on how specific partnerships were chosen and how those choices contributed to the medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) priorities. UNICEF was commended for its involvement in partnerships, including the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS, polio eradication and the partnership for maternal, newborn and child health, and was encouraged to find the means to sustain them. The secretariat said that partnership arrangements were undertaken in the overall framework of the MTSP. The partnership with the World Bank was very important and would be discussed in next year's report, with particular attention focussed on poverty reduction strategies (PRSs) and DevInfo.

15. Speakers noted the number of UNICEF staff members serving as Resident Coordinators and encouraged UNICEF to increase the number of candidates for these positions and to work with others to strengthen the Resident Coordinator system.

16. On gender mainstreaming, a number of delegates said that much remained to be done. The gender self-assessment done by country offices and the current evaluation of implementation of gender policies were noted with appreciation by several delegations, and others voiced support for the appointment of the Senior Adviser on Gender and Diversity. The secretariat replied that gender mainstreaming and gender parity were high priorities for UNICEF. The first phase of the gender parity evaluation had been completed and the more intensive second phase would be reported on later in the year.

17. Some delegates referred to the upcoming commemoration of the Special Session on Children, and one said that it would provide a useful opportunity for advocacy for the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Speakers also mentioned the sixtieth anniversary of UNICEF and of the important work the organization had done throughout its history.

18. The Executive Board took note of the report. The President said that a summary of the comments made during the discussion would be submitted to the Economic and Social Council for consideration at its 2007 substantive session, together with the report itself. The Board also took note of the report on the JIU.

B. Integrated approaches for achieving the Millennium Development Goals

19. In her opening remarks, the Executive Director recognized the high mortality burden that still affected many women and children in Africa and emphasized the commitment of UNICEF to develop strategies and take action for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. She emphasized the need

for expanding integrated community-based programmes, sharing good practices and working in partnerships for children. She described how at the "All Africa" meeting, held in Dakar in November 2006, UNICEF representatives and other participants had discussed approaches that worked.

20. After an introduction by Mr. Ernest Loevinsohn, Director General of the Health and Nutrition Directorate of the Canadian International Development Agency, presentations were made by three experts: Ms. Jennifer Bryce, Epidemiologist with the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health; Ms. Joy Lawn, Senior Research and Policy Advisor for Saving Newborn Lives, Save the Children-USA; and Mr. Yaw Ansu, Sector Director for Human Development in the Africa Regional Office of the World Bank. The panellists reported that remarkable progress had been made in sub-Saharan Africa, providing as examples girls' education and measles mortality reduction. However, many countries remained off track in meeting the health-related Millennium Development Goals. The three greatest single causes of under-five mortality in Africa were still pneumonia, malaria and diarrhoea. Undernutrition contributed to more than half of all deaths among children under five years of age; as a group of disorders, neonatal diseases were also a major cause of death; and HIV/AIDS was the major cause of death in southern Africa and an important cause elsewhere. Poor water supply and sanitation conditions contributed significantly to diarrhoeal disease mortality.

21. The presentations reaffirmed that the causes of neonatal, child and maternal mortality were well known and that the interventions to combat them were simple, relatively inexpensive and effective. The presentation also emphasized the need to avoid false dichotomies: vertical versus integrated programmes; care for the mother versus the child; systems versus outcomes. The issue now was how to scale up delivery rapidly. More than ever before, funding was available, but concerns of equity and sustainability remained.

22. Delegations appreciated the format of the panel discussion, which included participants from partner agencies and academia. The delegations from Africa reaffirmed the commitment of their countries, welcomed the draft African Union Framework on Child Survival and highlighted that action was most needed at subnational level to address the equity gap. Countries with good progress generally had stable governments and demonstrated political leadership and had established delivery systems to the community level. One speaker noted the connection between female literacy and health outcomes.

23. Several delegations were concerned about the sustainability of the integrated community-based approaches for delivering multiple interventions and noted the need to strengthen health systems at the same time. Panellists affirmed that efforts would take place within existing health systems but that the accelerated child survival and development, like other similar approaches, was in fact delivering services and building systems simultaneously.

24. One speaker suggested that this initiative could learn from the success of the measles initiative and set very specific targets for coverage and funding that were publicly reviewed annually. Another speaker emphasized the importance of ensuring that this work coordinated well with that of the Global Funds.

25. The Executive Director, in her closing remarks, reaffirmed that UNICEF was committed to tracking progress on the health-related Millennium Development Goals more frequently with more robust tools. She expressed confidence that the follow-up action to the All Africa meeting would lead to measurable and sustainable results, placing children at the heart of development.

C. Update on the Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS campaign

26. The report (E/ICEF/2007/5) was introduced by the Chief of the HIV/AIDS Section. Delegations expressed strong support for the campaign and its four programme areas and for the increased focus on measuring results for children, and requested future updates with data on the integration of children's needs and rights in national policy frameworks and poverty reduction strategies. Speakers underscored the importance of strengthened and well-coordinated partnerships at global and national levels. They emphasized the need for active engagement of national Governments and civil society in scaling up programmes in the four priority areas. Delegations said that progress for children was linked to continued advocacy for the Convention on the Rights of Child and gender equality. A specific request referred to an evaluation of a programme funded by France and UNICEF on children affected by HIV and AIDS in Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo and the need to share its findings. The secretariat was asked to provide an oral report to the annual session of the Executive Board on progress made in eliminating barriers to joint programming at the country level.

D. Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative

27. The report (E/ICEF/2007/4) was introduced by the Director, Programme Division. A representative of the World Food Programme (WFP) later joined in the response to questions. Delegations acknowledged the importance of addressing child hunger and undernutrition as a key element of Millennium Development Goal 1 and the Millennium Summit agenda. They generally welcomed the Initiative and the goals of the proposed Global Framework, which was seen as providing a useful reference for intensified action.

28. Speakers agreed that integrated approaches based on community-level actions would enhance the relevance of the Initiative. The proposed involvement of the private sector and NGOs would strengthen the partnership arrangements that were needed to accelerate efforts towards achieving the targets of Goal 1. Many delegations welcomed the collaboration between UNICEF and WFP in support of national efforts at scaling up interventions to address child hunger and undernutrition.

29. Several delegations raised concerns about the sustainability of interventions, including the provision of commodities, including food aid, and of the "essential package" approach. They requested more information on whether the Initiative would operate in a vertical manner or be closely aligned to national plans and to government ownership. Speakers asked if and how internal resources would be reallocated by UNICEF and national Governments to support the Initiative. It was stated that the Initiative should address the underlying causes of hunger and undernutrition and not focus merely on quick wins and direct interventions that were unlikely to be sustainable.

30. The secretariat replied that the revised version of the Global Framework indicated in more detail how national ownership and alignment with national policies and plans, such as PRSs, would be ensured. Further work would be done on strategies to strengthen national capacities through the Initiative. The Framework also addressed concerns regarding sustainability and monitoring. Sustained results would be achieved through more effective and better-coordinated investments in children, empowerment of families and communities, greater utilization of cost-effective and recommended household care practices and synergies across a wide range of the Millennium Development Goals.

31. Several delegations requested clarification on how the Initiative was integrated into the MTSP beyond the area of young child survival and development, and if the Initiative would divert human and financial resources from other priorities of the MTSP, including for programmes at the country level. Delegations also requested information on how the Initiative reflected the human rights-based approach and the extent to which different vulnerable groups would be reached; and a strengthening of the results focus of the Initiative, including the development of indicators, in addition to those in the MTSP, to monitor its progress and effectiveness.

32. The secretariat replied that the Initiative had been designed fully within the framework of the MTSP and its supporting strategies, and that the human rights-based approach had guided the formulation of the Global Framework. As such, the Initiative was an instrument for an acceleration of the achievement of organizational targets and the corresponding Millennial Goals, based on building more effective partnerships and encouraging national and international decision-making in favour of children. The Initiative covered and would contribute to results beyond Goal 1 and the first focus area of the MTSP. It would have strong benefits for child survival and for disease control. Improved nutrition among young children would also help ensure their readiness for school and ability to learn.

33. Some delegations asked about arrangements for implementation and whether capacity limitations of countries and UNICEF field offices had been considered; what would be the responsibility of Member States for implementation; whether approved country programmes would need to be revised; whether a communication strategy, coordinated with other partners, would be used to guide field staff; and what the role of the World Bank would be, given its role in the evolution of PRSs and other national plans. They also indicated that the Initiative should not burden existing programmes. The focus should be on designing approaches on a country-by-country basis, where the need was greatest. Efforts should be made to avoid over-burdening national partners, and to work closely with them to strengthen the necessary national capacities for planning, implementation and monitoring. The Initiative should also build synergies with regional-level programmes and regional development banks.

34. The secretariat replied that Initiative contained provision for improving food security at the household level, in response to specific circumstances and needs. This could include the promotion of livelihoods and household production, with support from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and other partners, as well as the promotion of social safety nets and support to food supplementation for vulnerable groups. The main focus was on empowering households to prevent future undernutrition and hunger and to avoid emergency situations, rather than on expanding the distribution of food aid.

35. Some delegations enquired about how the Initiative would be organized; the roles of each main partner, including UNICEF; governance arrangements; the criteria for selection of countries; and how the operations of the Initiative would be financed. Delegations asked whether developing countries had been consulted and how ongoing participation by partner countries in implementation and monitoring could be assured.

36. The secretariat replied that collaboration on the Initiative was based on the existing Memorandum of Understanding between UNICEF and WFP, and would benefit from the wider context for intensified United Nations collaboration at country level that is provided, for example, by the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and joint programming mechanisms. The World Bank continued to be a technical collaborator in the Initiative and a prospective member of the partners group. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was expected to chair the Initiative in its first stages. Detailed discussions were under way on the role and contributions of various agencies, including FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the World Health Organization (WHO), international NGOs and the United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition.

37. On the alignment of existing plans and budgets, the secretariat said that the Initiative aimed to help to ensure that the nutrition-related targets and issues received appropriate attention in national plans, based on the Millennium development Goals, as emphasized by the 2005 World Summit. Part of the purpose was to encourage and where necessary assist Governments in strengthening the focus of their PRSs and other national plans on the Goals, including the targets relating to children, hunger and nutrition. Such revisions should be based on the latest available data and analysis on the scope and causes of hunger and nutrition in individual countries, and international experience concerning the most effective approaches. The Initiative would assist in disseminating such information to decision makers.

38. Revision of UNICEF-assisted country programmes could be take place, where necessary, through the UNDAF review and mid-term review processes. More generally, the Initiative would reflect the trend, envisaged in the MTSP, for UNICEF work at country level - in common with that of the United Nations as a whole - to evolve from a focus on project management to more “upstream” policy support, capacity development and evidence-based advocacy. In reflecting and supporting this ongoing trend, the Initiative would minimize any specific implications for the work load of staff at country level. There was already considerable interest in and support for the Initiative at country level, and approaches contained in the Global Framework were already in operation and being supported in a number of countries. A coordinated communication strategy for staff was envisaged.

39. Countries would be selected for specific focus in response to interest expressed by Governments, United Nations country teams and field offices. The scale and severity of hunger and undernutrition among children, as well as data on the rate of progress in reducing undernutrition among countries, would also be taken into account.

40. See the annex, decision 2007/1, for the decision adopted by the Executive Board.

E. Proposals for UNICEF programme cooperation

Approval of revised country programme documents (CPDs)

41. The President stated that in accordance with decision 2002/4, the Board had commented on the draft CPDs and approved the aggregate indicative budgets for 33 country programmes at the annual and second regular sessions of 2006. The draft CPDs were then revised, taking into account, as appropriate, comments made by delegations during that session and a summary results matrix was added. The revised CPDs were posted on the UNICEF website by end-November 2006. Decision 2002/4 also stated that the revised CPDs were to be approved by the Executive Board at the current session on a no-objection basis, unless five members had informed the secretariat in writing, by end-December 2006, of their wish to bring any country programme before the Board. Because he had been informed by the secretariat that no such comments were received, the country programmes were approved for Algeria, Belize, Brazil, Central African Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Honduras, Iraq, Jamaica, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Panama, Paraguay, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, South Africa, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, United Republic of Tanzania. Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

42. Following the adoption of CPDs, two delegations expressed concern for the humanitarian situation of the people in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and requested that additional monitoring of the country programme take place to ensure that assistance was reaching the intended recipients, especially children and women. One of the delegations requested a comprehensive audit of the programmes in that country over the last seven years, stating that audits should be made available to members of the Board. The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea stated that his Government, with UNICEF assistance, was paying special attention to monitoring, which was in line with domestic law and relevant regulations of UNICEF and other international organizations. Moreover, the internal audit process of UNICEF had proven successful regarding monitoring and evaluation. The Government did not foresee any problem on this issue. The Government would continue its long history of cooperation with UNICEF in implementing the programme and in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

43. The representative of Honduras stated that global sustained commitment was necessary for combating AIDS, hunger and undernutrition among children, and for promoting gender parity and ending all types of discrimination. For Honduras, the strategic axis of cooperation rests on human rights, freedom, developing capacity, fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals, combating AIDS, investing in human beings, education, health, world development and food security to provide successful and transparent democratic governance. His Government attached great importance to Security Council resolution 1612 (2005), which aimed to improve monitoring and reporting to protect children in armed conflict, and was committed to fighting injustice, eradicating poverty and defending human dignity, especially regarding children.

44. Another speaker said his Government would support the "One United Nations" pilot in the United Republic of Tanzania and Mozambique, two of the eight pilot countries to implement the

concept introduced by the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence. The speaker encouraged both Governments and UNICEF to support the pilots and share experiences.

45. The representative of Sudan said that his Government worked with the United Nations agencies, especially UNICEF and civil organizations, on ensuring progress for children and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The goal of strengthening peace remained a main objective of his Government, and development was the key to sustaining peace. The CPD (E/ICEF/2006/P/L.23), while good in many aspects, contained several inaccuracies. These included the omission of the signing of the peace agreement, which terminated armed conflict in eastern Sudan; the use of outdated statistics; and the disregard of the Government and non-governmental efforts in dealing with exploitation, violence and abuse concerning children. The document also did not refer to reports of sexual abuse committed by some United Nations personnel and peacekeepers in southern Sudan, which required an investigation, trials for offenders and the compensation of the disadvantaged. He emphasized his Government's commitment to cooperating with UNICEF on programmes.

46. The Director, Programme Division, responded that the sexual abuse and exploitation by United Nations personnel was intolerable and the policy of zero tolerance must be enforced. UNICEF shared the delegation's concern. Investigations were undertaken by the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services, which was the appropriate authority to issue a report. He described the many actions supported by UNICEF and its partners to prevent the sexual abuse and exploitation of children throughout Sudan. Regarding the statistics, the upcoming longer-term programme document would provide updated information and statistics and would reflect political changes as well.

Additional regular resources for approved country programmes

47. The report (E/ICEF/2007/P/L.1) was introduced by the Director, Programme Division, and approved without comment. (See annex, decision 2007/2.)

F. UNICEF financial report and audited financial statements for the biennium ended 31 December 2005 and the report of the Board of Auditors

48. The report (A/61/5/Add.2) was introduced by the Comptroller. Delegations welcomed the unqualified nature of the audit opinion and noted the findings and recommendations of the Board of Auditors. Speakers noted the recommendations made in respect of increasing the proportion of regular to total resources, the growth in fund balances and the capacity of UNICEF to sustain further growth in the portfolio of other resources-funded projects, the disparity between the strategic priorities approved by the Executive Board and the allocation of other resources, and inter-agency activities and coordination. One delegation discussed the importance of the external audit process and timely reporting on audit recommendations, raising questions about the wording of the audit opinion, the terms of reference for audit, and the scope and length of the long form report. Another delegation urged UNICEF to establish an accountability framework for ensuring the implementation of audit recommendations.

49. The Comptroller explained that although regular resources income had increased by 11 per cent in the biennium ended 31 December 2005 compared with the previous biennium, the increase was due primarily to private sector activities, mostly through the efforts of the National Committees, and this might be an indication of changing donor funding strategies. He said that the need to strengthen organizational capacity to ensure support to programme implementation had been identified in the planned financial estimates for 2006-2009 (E/ICEF/2006/AB/L.6) and that more specific details would be provided in the proposed biennial support budget for 2008-2009, to be submitted to the Executive Board at the first regular session of 2008. He also provided clarification on the components of the fund balance at 31 December 2005. Of the total balance of $2,195 million, $332 million and $1,403 million represented funds for trust fund and other resources activities, respectively; $73 million was held for funded reserves (such as after-service medical benefits); and $382 million represented funds for regular resources activities. He said that 'unexpended' did not mean 'unallocated' and referred to the measures approved by the Board when it approved the planned financial estimates (decision 2006/15 and E/ICEF/2006/AB/L.6) to employ regular resources funds.

50. See the annex, decision 2007/3, for the decision adopted by the Executive Board.

G. Supplementary support budget for crisis management and business continuity capacity

51. Mr. Toshiyuki Niwa, Deputy Executive Director, introduced the report (E/ICEF/2007/AB/L.1). The report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions was contained in E/ICEF/2007/AB/L.2.

52. A delegation referred to the previous recommendation of the Advisory Committee, as discussed at the second regular session of 2006, and questioned the reasons for the Committee's change of opinion. The Deputy Executive Director replied that UNICEF was one of the first United Nations agencies to prepare and submit its crisis management plan to the Secretary-General but its level of engagement and coordination with other agencies was not initially clear. The Advisory Committee was now satisfied given the subsequent progress in development of other agencies' plans as well as the active role of the Office of the New York Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Coordinator, which had strengthened coordination efforts across the United Nations system.

53. See the annex, decision 2007/4, for the decision adopted by the Executive Board.

H. Private Sector Division: workplan and proposed budget for 2007

54. The Director ad interim of the Private Sector Division (PSD) presented the report (E/ICEF/2007/AB/L.3) and highlighted the strong contribution of National Committees to private sector income. Several delegations commended PSD and the National Committees for the excellent results attained in 2006.

55. The representative of the Standing Group of National Committees for UNICEF thanked PSD colleagues for their support and collaboration and noted the particularly strong growth in regular resources income. He stressed the importance of maintaining the UNICEF brand and visibility - an

essential ingredient of fund-raising success - in harmonization and United Nations reform, and supported the continued use of investment funds to drive growth and development of private sector income.

56. Several delegations indicated that the sales forecasts for cards and products could be optimistic, noting that past actual results had been lower than forecast. Questions were also raised regarding the relationship between product cost and sales ratios, and online activities of cards and products. For future reports, delegations requested a more detailed breakdown of private sector income, as well as more information regarding the use and performance of investment funds. One delegation applauded PSD efforts in fund-raising by country offices.

57. The Director ad interim responded that initiatives such as the partnership with Hallmark to obtain a wider distribution of UNICEF cards in the United States would address some of the issues raised concerning cards sales potential. In addition, PSD would continue to explore potential partnerships to help to reduce UNICEF costs and increase product distribution. Information on investment funds and funding sources was readily available and would be included in future PSD reports to the Board. He advised that the country office fund-raising strategy was under review.

58. The Executive Board approved the work plan and proposed budget for 2007 (see annex, decision 2007/5).

I. Pledging event

59. The Executive Director expressed appreciation for the confidence that Governments, National Committees and the private sector continued to show in the work of UNICEF. With only eight years left before the 2015 deadline for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, UNICEF needed to accelerate progress to help to ensure that the Goals were reached. The ability of UNICEF to work effectively depended on predictable income, particularly core resources. While overall Government contributions to UNICEF had more than doubled since 2000, for the last two years regular resources had dropped below 40 per cent of total funding. Preliminary figures showed that UNICEF had received $465 million from donor Governments in 2006, compared to $469 million in 2005.

60. Including pledges received before the event, UNICEF received pledges for 2007 regular resources in the amount of $260.3 million (compared to $256.6 million in 2006) from 49 Governments. This corresponded to 48 per cent of the financial medium-term plan target of $543 million. Six countries (Denmark, Finland, Grenada, Netherlands, New Zealand and Norway) indicated multi-year pledges. Nine donors increased their pledge by 7 per cent or more in local currency (Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Israel, Luxembourg, Norway, Slovenia, Spain and Turkey). Several major donors were not able to pledge due to incompatibility in their fiscal years. One country, Serbia, pledged for the first time at the pledging event. Returning donors were Cuba, Grenada, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Mongolia, Namibia and Samoa.

Other matters

Briefing on the organizational review

The Executive Director gave a brief summary of the organizational review, which aims to re that UNICEF works efficiently and effectively towards results for children. The independent ultants had developed a set of options and recommendations, based on extensive consultations, had presented them to the Global Management Team the previous week. While the mission of CEF remained valid, adjustments were needed in organizational structures, capabilities and untabilities to ensure that all parts of the organization were more mission-focused, performance-d and results-driven. Further discussion on implementation priorities was expected in the next ral weeks. A more thorough briefing for the Bureau was planned for March 2007 and for the cutive Board at the annual session in June 2007.

Delegations requested more thorough information in future briefings, the inclusion of all nbers of the Board in briefings and clarification on the role of the Executive Board in the review ess. The Executive Director responded that while some directional shifts were emerging, various ons and recommendations were still under consideration. She agreed to keep the Board informed ture progress.

Preparation for the 2007 annual and second regular sessions of the Executive Board

Ms. Rima Salah, Deputy Executive Director, said that the education and child protection nents of the MTSP would be presented at the annual session and second regular session, ectively. The Secretary ad interim of the Executive Board summarized preparations for the rd's annual session in June and the second regular session in September, noting that the current slots for each session would remain as scheduled.

Preparations for the commemoration of the General Assembly Special Session on Children

Mr. Kul Gautam, Deputy Executive Director, briefed the Executive Board on preparations for General Assembly's 2007 commemorative plenary meeting on reviewing the progress made in lementing the Declaration and Plan of Action of the Special Session. The report of the Secretary-eral to be prepared for the meeting would be the first full five-year review of the Millennium elopment Goals and the goals of the Special Session. The UNICEF secretariat had held several rmal consultations on the timing and format of the session. Among the proposed dates was November 2007, the eighteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the d. Preparatory activities would include consultations with the Bureau of the Executive Board, the ident of the General Assembly, a small working group of Member States to be formed for the pose, and the Office of the Secretary-General. The secretariat would report to the Board following e preliminary consultations and welcomed its guidance.

K. Closing statements by the Executive Director and the President

65. The Executive Director announced a remarkable accomplishment: the achievement of the goal set at the 2002 General Assembly Special Session on Children of reducing measles by one half by the end of 2005 (compared with 1999). This milestone was largely the result of the work of the global Measles Partnership in which UNICEF has played an active role. She hailed this achievement as an example of how much can be accomplished through the powerful combination of cost-effective interventions, integrated approaches, political commitment and partnerships.

66. The President said that the important decisions taken and issues deliberated during the session would help to lay the groundwork for the future work of UNICEF. He thanked all present for the spirit of compromise and good will that had characterized the session.

III. Joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNICEF, UNDP/UNFPA and WFP

67. This chapter, originally submitted as an addendum to the report of the UNICEF Executive Board on its first regular session of 2007, is a summary of the discussions that took place during the joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNICEF, UNDP/UNFPA and WFP, held on 19 and 22 January 2007. The text was prepared by the secretariats of the funds and programmes and approved by the Presidents of the three Executive Boards.

A. Natural disaster preparedness

68. The President of the UNICEF Executive Board invited the UNICEF Executive Director to introduce the background paper and discussion on behalf of UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and WFP. She highlighted the importance of community resilience, national ownership and leadership and joint action, recommending five measures: (a) link early warning to early action, especially by communities; (b) reduce disaster risks for communities and increase their response capacity; (c) make emergency systems more dependable; (d) improve the capacity to mobilize and manage emergency response; and (e) enhance the focus on reducing risks, as recommended in the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015. Risk reduction should be integrated into country team approaches, the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and UNDAF; all efforts should link with government development plans.

69. The need to link preparedness with development was also emphasized by the Director, Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, Belgium, who summarized trends and impacts. Over 400 major disasters are reported each year and, though mortality has decreased, economic losses and the number of people requiring support are mounting. This trend is due especially to the increasing vulnerability of populations, particularly the poorest, who often live in high-risk areas. She called for improved evidence-based planning and community capacity.

70. In his presentation focusing on the experience of the Philippines, the Administrator, Philippines Office of Civil Defence, advocated for a participatory, integrated approach emphasizing community preparedness, risk reduction and early warning, with local governments playing a key role. The Philippines strategy includes an upgrading of the forecasting system; public information

campaigns; sustained disaster-training at all levels for response and risk reduction; and the strengthening of government and private response capacities.

71. In presenting the lessons learned based on the United Nations country team experience in Pakistan, where disaster management is well developed, the UNDP country director in Pakistan cited three gaps: limited expertise in long-term recovery and risk reduction; inadequate financing for preparedness and risk reduction; and a narrow donor interest in 'search and rescue'. Efforts must emphasize the involvement of all United Nations organizations, long-term disaster preparedness and risk reduction, capacity development at all levels, and non-governmental organization and civil society organization involvement in community-level preparedness.

72. The delegation of Pakistan clarified that the document "National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework" circulated at the session was still a working draft under consideration by the Government of Pakistan.

73. Delegations affirmed the urgency of enhancing national preparedness and risk reduction, calling for several measures: integrate risk assessment, disaster preparedness and risk reduction into all development activities and frameworks; integrate national with international early warning systems; improve information systems and information-sharing; foster greater inter-country, regional and South-South cooperation; integrate all aspects of disaster management; provide training and awareness-raising for decision makers at all levels; develop capacity at all levels, particularly in communities; strengthen internal preparedness plans and capabilities of United Nations organizations; clarify the roles and contributions of each organization, particularly in risk reduction; achieve closer United Nations collaboration with respect to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, including for the cluster approach; and adhere to the Hyogo Framework for Action.

B. Millennium Development Goal 1: Interlinked approaches to poverty alleviation

74. The President of the WFP Executive Board opened the session by inviting the Director of the Policy, Strategy and Programme Support Division and officiating Deputy Executive Director for WFP to introduce the background paper on behalf of the four organizations.

75. In his summary of the paper's central arguments, the Director noted that the four agencies have jointly identified a number of principles to guide enhanced integration: (a) common understanding of objectives, strategies and policy instruments; (b) pooling of resources and capacities in design and implementation of programmes; (c) integration with, and support for, national priorities; and (d) rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluating progress towards key targets, with clearly defined intermediate targets. Commitment and investment in line with these principles are already in motion. For integrated approaches to become institutionalized and commonplace in programming, the four organizations must continue to invest in overcoming enduring political, conceptual, operational and capacity obstacles.

76. The Minister of Planning from the Government of Liberia was invited to provide a field perspective on interlinked approaches to poverty alleviation. He focused on ongoing efforts to develop an interim poverty reduction strategy (iPRS). The experience of Liberia suggests that two related issues are crucial: national ownership of the strategy development process and prioritization among competing investment alternatives.

77. National ownership and appropriate prioritization were ensured by linking development of the iPRS to a broader effort to promote recovery and reform. A Liberia-specific comprehensive and integrated approach emerged featuring four pillars: ensuring peace and security; revitalization of the economy; strengthening governance and rule of law; and rehabilitating infrastructure and basic services. The Government of Liberia expressed confidence that, if supported by all partners, the resulting iPRS will serve as a platform for sustained recovery and growth. The Minister ended by encouraging the four organizations to deepen their involvement in Liberia with a view to improving coordination, information sharing, mutual accountability and partnership.

78. Questions and comments were invited from the floor. Discussions among delegations yielded the following conclusions: all parties must do much more if the targets of Millennium Development Goal 1 are to be met; efforts to integrate strategies, plans and investments are crucial; countries are the central players in efforts to reduce poverty and hunger, but in most cases they cannot do it alone, requiring assistance from partners, including the four organizations; efforts toward greater integration should be concentrated at the country level, and United Nations reform processes open considerable scope for such integration and concentration; the Millennium Development Goals, poverty reduction strategies, CCAs, UNDAFs and a range of regional and subregional platforms must be used to help catalyse and focus integration efforts; such efforts should be explicitly results-oriented, taking into account relevant national and global factors; and the four Executive Boards must be more cognizant of their responsibilities in promoting integration and joint activity, especially at the country level.

C. United Nations reform

79. The President of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board opened the session by expressing appreciation for his election as Board President and outlining the critical work to be done in the coming year. He opened the floor to the chairperson of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG).

80. The UNDG Chair and the Director General of the International Labour Organization introduced the topic of United Nations reform. The UNDG Chair reiterated that reform would create greater accountability to national partners by managing and sharing technical expertise, add effectiveness through the 180-degree mutual performance appraisal system and strengthen the resident coordinator system. Articulating common positions and strategies for the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes would also help governments to realize their national development strategies. The Chair underscored that the eight 'One United Nations' pilot countries should be considered experimental, each with unique circumstances affecting the approach, results and lessons.

81. The Director General thanked the Board and stressed that great challenges lie ahead but great opportunities also exist. Indicating that 'Delivering as One' must respect the mandates, governing structures and uniqueness of the organizations involved, he outlined the importance of tackling the systemic and procedural differences of each. He cautioned about moving too quickly, which might jeopardize reform initiatives; he raised concerns about funding imbalances in the multilateral system, which could fuel a discrepancy between the concept of 'One United Nations' and reality on the ground. In closing, the Director General outlined the challenges faced by resident coordinators, stressing the need for technical preparation, knowledge of the work of agencies, funds and programmes through reciprocal training, and reinforcement of the resident coordinator role at regional and sub-regional levels.

82. Some delegations emphasized the need to ensure continued support by the United Nations system in providing financial and technical support while protecting national priorities and enhancing country ownership. Several supported the eight pilots as the heart of reform efforts, which would draw upon the resources and capacities of the entire system to deliver coherence and coordination. Others expressed concern about the pilots, highlighting the danger of a potential disengagement between the implementation of some of the proposals of the High-level Panel and intergovernmental consultations on those recommendations. A number of delegations were interested in learning more about how the efficacy of the pilots in promoting coherence, efficiency and effectiveness would be determined. Some expressed concern that resident coordinator reforms might add bureaucratic administrative layers. Several delegations felt that the pace of United Nations change must be scaled up, with a stronger focus on accountable, transparent performance and results.

83. At least one delegation felt that funding to pilot countries might provide truer outcomes if agreed-upon levels were maintained. The delegation also felt it would be helpful to have access to internal audit reports of the individual funds and programmes to increase transparency. Almost all delegations cited the report and recommendations of the High-level Panel as extremely useful in the context of the ongoing reform debate. Several expressed a desire for the Executive Board to play a greater decision-making and guidance role.

84. The UNDG Chair and the Director General provided brief responses. Pilot countries are helping determine the important details that factor into the 'One United Nations' effort and are driving discussions at the intergovernmental level. Changes to the resident coordinator system will not create added bureaucracy; resident coordinators will draw from existing resources in their functioning. The UNDG Chair cautioned that coordination must not be mistaken for 'large meetings' and stressed that earmarked funds are affecting financial efficiency. The Director General concluded by reaffirming the tremendous potential for the resident coordinator to extract synergies and eliminate overlap and duplication.

D. Gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS

85. The session was introduced by the President, UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board. The UNFPA Executive Director spoke on behalf of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP, addressing the priority issues pertaining to the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS. She provided examples of joint actions in

the United Nations system and highlighted the challenges. The Director of the National STD/AIDS Programme in Brazil presented the experience of the country in addressing the feminization of the epidemic. It was followed by a presentation by the Africa HIV/AIDS advisor for the International Planned Parenthood Federation, focusing on the importance of male involvement in addressing HIV/AIDS. Finally, a representative of the Asian Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (and a member of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS Programme Coordinating Board) shared a personal perspective regarding her fight against HIV/AIDS.

86. The panellists highlighted the importance of the 'Three Ones' principles for the coordination of national responses and commended the four organizations for promoting greater South-South cooperation and discussing issues that represented the new global agenda, including the Millennium Development Goals. They underscored the need for increased financial commitment towards fighting the epidemic and the importance of targeted programming for adolescents and youth, with a strong focus on gender issues such as power relations, gender-based violence and the burden of care on women and girls.

87. Delegations welcomed the presentations and the cooperation and collaboration among the four organizations and acknowledged the importance of the lead roles of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP in addressing the epidemic. They commended the background paper for its analysis of the gender determinants of HIV/AIDS. Delegations encouraged the four agencies to expand their sharing of experiences among themselves and with other development partners. They emphasized the importance of tracking and reporting results and the impact of programmes to demonstrate how joint interventions impact gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS. They cautioned against duplication of efforts and recommended that the four organizations increase their joint initiatives within the framework of the overall United Nations reform process. Delegations requested greater accountability in the allocation of resources, particularly related to HIV/AIDS and gender issues, including women's empowerment.

88. Delegations highlighted the need to take into account socio-cultural approaches and involve key actors such as traditional and religious leaders when programming for HIV/AIDS, and supported the importance of recognizing notions of gender roles and masculinity. They emphasized the need to analyse and factor in the underlying structures in society and the vulnerabilities of women and girls in designing effective programmes. They underscored the need for increased programme resources. They also underscored the links between HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health and urged that greater attention be given to gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict situations.

89. Delegations emphasized the importance of following up on the recommendations of the GTT on Improving AIDS Coordination. Noting the importance of limiting parallel programming by strengthening coordination among United Nations organizations, they called for broader and better coordinated results-based approaches throughout the programme cycle, including more focused implementation and better monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Part two
2007 annual session

Held at United Nations Headquarters from 4 to 7 June 2007

I. Organization of the session

A. Opening statements

90. The President opened the session by calling for a continued spirit of cooperation. He hailed UNICEF efforts to improve management and planning and underlined the need for partnership at all levels in order to continue to achieve goals for children.

91. In her opening statement, the Executive Director announced the appointment of two Deputy Executive Directors: Ms. Hilde Johnson, former Minister of Development for Norway; and Mr. Omar Abdi, UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa. They would take up their posts later in the summer.

92. She went on to review the agenda, stressing the importance of UNICEF work in the field, where outcomes were delivered that made a difference in the lives of millions of children by providing aid, advice and assistance; by coordinating immunization campaigns and interventions that addressed other health problems like undernutrition; and by empowering communities and families to build environments that allowed children to meet their potential.

B. Adoption of the agenda

93. The Executive Board adopted the agenda, timetable and organization of work (E/ICEF/2007/8) for the session.

94. In accordance with rule 50.2 of the rules of procedure, the Secretary a.i of the Executive Board announced that credentials had been submitted by 46 observer delegations, 4 United Nations bodies, 2 intergovernmental organizations, the Standing Group of National Committees for UNICEF and 4 NGOs.

II. Deliberations of the Executive Board

A. Annual report of the Executive Director: progress and achievements against the medium-term strategic plan

95. The report (E/ICEF/2007/9) was introduced by the Executive Director and by Deputy Executive Director Kul Gautam.

96. Delegations welcomed the comprehensive, analytic nature of the report and the accompanying compilation of data, saying that the latter had increased the organization's focus on results. Many speakers said that the report constituted a significant effort to improve the accountability of UNICEF to the Executive Board. Speakers expressed satisfaction with the reporting of results for each focus area of the MTSP and with the data companion to help assess the UNICEF performance in the areas of programme management and administration. A delegation said that activities were sometimes presented as results and only limited information on the attribution of results was included in the report. In some areas, a lack of baseline data had limited the understanding of the contributions made by UNICEF.

97. Some delegations expressed satisfaction that UNICEF was continuing to make the United Nations system more effective in addressing the rights and priority needs of children at country level through its effective role in country programmes of cooperation in the context of the UNDAF. Delegations also expressed appreciation for UNICEF work as part of United Nations country teams in delivering results for children and contributing to the Millennium Development Goals. Some said that UNICEF should further systematize its application of the human rights-based approach and that future reports should be clearer on progress related to United Nations reform and coherence. Another delegation said that it had received mixed signals at country level on UNICEF involvement in United Nations reforms and that the use of pooled funds for joint programmes was limited. One delegation indicated that decisions related to reform must continue to be built on the basis of adequate and permanent consultations with States, at both the field and central levels.

98. Several delegations expressed interest in the organizational review and the management response.

99. Delegations applauded UNICEF leadership in some countries in promoting the participation of excluded children and the commitment of UNICEF to gender equality. Some called for increased attention to gender-based reporting in future reports. Speakers also expressed satisfaction that UNICEF was carrying out a major thematic evaluation on gender and looked forward to its findings and the use of the study.

100. Several delegations expressed satisfaction with the organization's revitalized leadership for child survival and development and its increased focus on upstream work through the MTSP focus area on policy advocacy and partnerships for children's rights. A delegation welcomed the shift to upstream policy through increased engagement in sector-wide approaches to health and education, and valued the UNICEF engagement in key international partnerships and regional learning of lessons. However, there was some way to go in reorienting country staff away from stand-alone initiatives towards the policy advocacy and partnerships role, based on evidence and lessons, as envisaged in the MTSP.

101. UNICEF was commended for initiatives on reducing child mortality in Africa, support for the positive results on reduction of measles-related deaths and increased distribution of insecticide-treated nets and malaria drugs in malaria-endemic countries. Some delegations said that progress on sanitation was slow and that UNICEF needed to improve its capacities for planning, implementation and monitoring of this area.

102. Some delegations requested additional information on cluster leadership in emergencies and on how UNICEF was addressing post-conflict and transition issues in its programming.

103. UNICEF was commended for its work on basic education and gender equality in both regular programmes and in emergencies. Speakers hoped that initiatives for improving school enrolment and retention, participation of girls in school and for child-friendly schools would accelerate progress towards Millennium Development Goal 2 on basic education.

104. Many speakers expressed concern that HIV/AIDS-related expenditures appeared to have fallen significantly in 2006 and called for fuller information when the detailed analysis of expenditures was available. UNICEF was requested to continue its promotion of paediatric AIDS treatment as part of mainstream response. Two delegations said that there was little information in the report on the

UNICEF response and results achieved in relation to reproductive health and adolescent health and that UNICEF should step up its work in those areas. Another delegation welcomed the UNICEF role in public-private partnerships and its role in facilitating drug purchases.

105. Several delegations commended the organization's achievements in child protection, but some said there was a lack of analysis, baselines and sufficiently clear indicators which should be corrected in future reporting. Two delegations expressed satisfaction with the reporting on the Security Council resolutions relating to child protection and called for UNICEF to further accelerate actions based on the United Nations Study on Violence against Children.

106. Two delegations said that the MTSP focus area on policy advocacy and partnerships had helped UNICEF to strengthen its support for child-related policies and actions in national development plans, poverty reduction strategies and sector-wide approaches. Another delegation supported the work of the Innocenti Research Centre, including its research on the reduction of harmful traditional practices. Delegations expressed satisfaction with the high-level engagement secured by UNICEF for child participation, for example in the "Junior-8" meeting linked to the G8 summit. Some delegations called for using the Convention on the Rights of the Child as the framework for further expanding efforts to promote child participation.

107. Some delegations said that although there had been a slight increase in regular resources income during 2006, there still was a major imbalance between regular and other resources. They called on countries to further increase their contributions to regular resources to help ensure that UNICEF could carry out its core mandate. Some delegations announced their intention to increase their regular resources contributions in future years and to advocate for further increases. In this context, the results-based reporting of the annual report was very useful.

108. In her response, the Executive Director said that the work of UNICEF was rights-based while remaining focused on results. She further stressed the importance of evidence, data and partnerships in accelerating support to countries for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. UNICEF was highly engaged with the pilot countries on delivering as "One United Nations" and UNICEF staff at all levels were fully committed to working with other United Nations partners in helping countries to achieve results for children.

109. The Deputy Executive Director committed UNICEF to better analysis in its reporting, including the continued use of a data companion to the annual report to report on results. UNICEF was very active in efforts to increase United Nations coherence and remained guided by the General Assembly's triennial comprehensive policy review on operational activities for development and national priorities. UNICEF would continue to seek the right balance between building successful models through project and programme assistance, support to child-related policies and advocacy for leveraging actions and resources for children at all levels. Available flexible funding was used to support countries which are chronically underfunded in an effort to strengthen results for children. He called on UNICEF funding partners to increase their support to regular resources and thematic funding for the five focus areas of the MTSP.

110. See annex, decision 2007/6 for the decision adopted by the Executive Board.

B. Update on the UNICEF organizational review: oral report

111. The Executive Director shared the latest thinking on each of the five strategic shifts identified by the consultant working on the organizational review, whose synthesis report had been distributed to the Executive Board in advance of the session. A key message from the review was the need for a more flexible and responsive organization that was fully equipped to carry out its mandate in an ever-changing environment. UNICEF was currently examining how best to implement change around the recommended shifts, which included: (a) sharpening programme focus, formulation, and strategy; (b) realigning structures and systems to deliver quality results; (c) providing global knowledge leadership for children; (d) enhancing partnerships; and (e) managing for results and efficiency. The 2008-2009 biennial support budget, to be reviewed by the Executive Board in January 2008, would provide a timely opportunity to identify options regarding structure and staffing and to examine the sequencing of the implementation activities.

112. Overall, delegations said that the consultant's report provided a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and opportunities facing UNICEF, and commended UNICEF for making this effort to strengthen the organization. Some delegations emphasized the importance of the UNICEF role in strengthening national ownership and supporting the Millennium Development Goals.

113. Several delegations requested a report outlining the UNICEF management response to the consultant's report, to be submitted to the Board at the second regular session. The report should provide details of the proposed changes, including the impact on the UNICEF presence in the field at the country and regional levels, particularly in the Asia region; the timeframes envisaged for the implementation of the proposed changes; and a clear explanation of the implications for the next biennial support budget.

114. The representative of Nepal said that the proposed integration of the regional offices for South Asia and for East Asia and the Pacific might negatively affect children in those regions, which had exceptionally large child populations and were behind on achieving many of the Millennium Development Goals. UNICEF should strengthen the capacity of the Regional Office for South Asia to support country offices in the region. The Executive Director stated that consultations were underway regarding the offices.

115. Several delegations emphasized the importance of involving the Executive Board in the decision-making process and requested consultation on an ongoing basis. Others underlined the importance of engaging staff in the process. The Executive Director agreed to hold a series of informal consultations in advance of the second regular session.

116. To a question regarding the UNICEF response to the consultant's recommendation on shifting the organization's focus beyond basic survival, the Executive Director said that UNICEF would continue to prioritize child survival and the health-related Millennium Development Goals. However, as countries progressed and basic needs were met for larger portions of the population, UNICEF interventions should be adjusted to meet the changing needs of countries.

117. On the management of a large number of retirements, she said that UNICEF would search for new and fresh talent, increasing staff training and improving succession planning.

118. A delegation urged the Executive Director and senior management team to bring together coherently the organizational review and implementation of the report of the High-Level Panel, and produce a prioritized, resourced and measurable plan. To this and other questions about the linkage between the organizational review and United Nations coherence, including regional alignment, joint systems and common services, the Executive Director said that efficiency gained through the change process would benefit not only UNICEF but system-wide coherence as a whole. Learning from the eight pilot initiatives would be essential in clarifying the UNICEF contribution to United Nations coherence.

119. Asked about the link between the organizational review and the MTSP, she said that the review had been initiated to improve the performance of UNICEF and achieve better results for children in the context of the MTSP and the Millennium Development Goals.

120. See annex, decision 2007/7, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.

121. After the adoption of the decision, a delegation said that the Executive Board must play a governing and not a micromanaging role, and in that context the delegation looked forward to receiving more information on the organizational review.

122. Two delegations from South Asia expressed support for the earlier statement made by the representative of Nepal, which underscored the point that any future decision on the possible merging of the two UNICEF regional offices in Asia should be taken by UNICEF only after full consultation with the Governments of the region.

C. Update on UNICEF gender parity and equality

123. The report (E/ICEF/2007/12) was introduced by the Special Adviser for Gender and Diversity following remarks by the Executive Director.

124. Several delegations congratulated UNICEF for the concrete steps taken, following the gender review undertaken in 2005, to improve gender parity within the organization, positioning it among the top three United Nations agencies with respect to gender parity. This achievement was particularly impressive given the difficult conditions in many duty stations. It was suggested that UNICEF share its experience with other agencies.

125. Delegates nonetheless remarked that the desired outcome of 50-50 distribution between men and women remained a challenge, especially at senior levels. Imbalances still prevailed at the P-5 level and above, with staff from programme countries underrepresented in senior positions. Achievements to date should be sustained through a set of special measures.

126. Some delegations discussed the necessity of men's active involvement in advancing gender parity at all levels, especially senior levels. Other speakers underlined the need for specific leadership training for women in directorship positions.

127. Delegations requested data on gender balance and diversity for UNICEF staff in programme countries and on geographic diversity among female staff. The availability of this data and studies would enable UNICEF to undertake targeted interventions and achieve better results. A number of delegations requested information on the issue of retention of female staff as they moved up the

corporate ladder. They suggested that the level of retention should be used as a measure of success in such areas as human resources and the work environment.

128. UNICEF was encouraged to work within a broader framework of women's mobility in the United Nations system, with an emphasis on mobility between agencies through cooperation and partnerships. Some delegations emphasized the need to improve the care options for newborn children, to reconcile family and professional life particularly in difficult duty stations, and to combat harassment in all its forms.

129. Several delegates referred to the expected wave of retirements as a great challenge and an opportunity for the organization. They recommended that future retirements be managed with a gender-balance perspective. Gender balance should also be a key element of the organizational review.

130. The Special Adviser highlighted current measures to improve gender parity in difficult duty stations. UNICEF was reviewing a mobility policy that would better align career development with a life-cycle approach. In place were a special leave policy that would allow UNICEF staff to maintain contact with the organization while on leave, new parental leave support provisions and an enhanced harassment policy and training. Data on retention were being compiled and would, together with a newly designed diversity report card, allow UNICEF to report on progress in the future. The Executive Director acknowledged the difficulties associated with establishing work-life balance and managing career development for couples with both spouses in the organization. She stressed the commitment of UNICEF to aggressively pursue any violations of the sexual harassment policy and to strengthen training opportunities for both men and women in leadership positions and at all levels of the organization.

D. The UNICEF education strategy in support of the medium-term strategic plan

131. The report (E/ICEF/2007/10) was introduced by the Director, Programme Division. Delegations commended UNICEF for the thorough and intensive consultations with a wide range of key partners that had resulted in the final strategy paper. Overall, delegations found the strategy paper to be a comprehensive guide by UNICEF on how to achieve the rights of every child to education and the reach the education-related Millennium Development Goals. They supported the UNICEF commitment to reach the last 10 per cent of the most marginalized children. This focus, coupled with its leadership in education in emergencies and post-conflict and fragile contexts, gave UNICEF a unique opportunity to make a major contribution to the achievement of the Goals.

132. A number of delegations welcomed the inclusion of early childhood development and quality of education as cross-cutting areas in support of the strategy rather than stand-alone areas, as this approach emphasized their crucial importance in all aspects of education.

133. Many delegations commended the strategy's emphasis on partnerships and coordination, for example, the Education for All Global Action Plan partnership led by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Speakers highlighted the importance of the strategy in monitoring the impact of United Nations reform in countries. The role of NGOs was stressed, given their ability to test and implement new approaches.

134. While the emphasis on seamless support to national education plans was welcomed, "projectized" funding continued to undermine country-led approaches within national education budgets. Upstream work would require new skills and reprofiling of country teams, and therefore it would be helpful to indicate implications of United Nations reform and the organizational review for ensuring stronger competencies and upstream profiles of education staff, particularly those in priority conflict and fragile contexts.

135. Delegations commended UNICEF work on girls' education and encouraged further efforts through the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative. The UNICEF emphasis on equality and empowerment was commended, as were the strategy's innovative interventions to accelerate quality basic education, including through the provision of such essential services as health, water, nutrition, safety and security at school. A number of delegations said that a rights-based approach to programming in education was crucial to eliminating gender discrimination and violence in schools, and encouraged UNICEF to mainstream the human-rights based approach to programming within the education strategy.

136. The strategy's emphasis on education in emergencies was well received. Nonetheless, a number of speakers asked for better distinction between emergency response and post-conflict transition programming in education, and one delegation stressed the need for greater focus on disaster risk prevention. Speakers stressed the importance of addressing the needs of girls for education during emergencies and of providing "second chance" opportunities for children who have missed school, through non-formal education, vocation and technical training for youth. One delegation indicated that the reference to possible support for strengthening the cluster approach to education in emergencies did not constitute an endorsement of that approach, as applied in specific countries, and that it still needed to be comprehensively evaluated.

137. A delegation expressed concern that the relationship between monitoring and evaluation and MTSP reporting and accountability was not sufficiently reflected in the strategy. A group of delegations emphasized that MTSP focus area 5, policy advocacy and partnerships, was crucial in strengthening the added value of UNICEF *vis-à-vis* other partners in education and other sectors and that the UNICEF capacity in social policy should be strongly linked to the strategy. The Director replied that the MTSP included key targets for reporting on results. The strategy detailed the kind of indicators that would be used to report on the MTSP. Asked about the criteria for selecting priority countries, the Director said that the criteria will be reviewed regularly as conditions in the countries changed.

138. See annex, decision 2007/8 for the decision adopted by the Executive Board.

139. After the adoption of the decision, a speaker said that in the context of his delegation's approval of the education strategy, the term "reproductive and sexual health" in the strategy paper should not be construed as an endorsement of abortion by his delegation. Abstinence was the best and most responsible choice for adolescents, and parents and caregivers were the most appropriate guides for children and had primary responsibility for them.

140. Another delegation said that the classification of countries in the strategy should be flexible rather than rigid and should take into consideration the leadership role of countries in guiding actions.

E. Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative

141. The report (E/ICEF/2007/11) was introduced by the Director, Programme Division.

142. Many delegations expressed their overall support for the Initiative and its goals, which they said were consistent with many national and regional development strategies. A number of delegations drew strong links between the Initiative and poverty reduction, particularly in the achievement of Millennium Development Goals 1 and 4. Some delegations emphasized the need to target groups most affected by hunger and undernutrition because they were the hardest to reach.

143. A group of delegations expressed concern as to whether this Initiative was the optimal way forward to reducing child hunger and undernutrition.

144. Delegations asked for more information about the budget, including how costs would be shared with the WFP, noting that the WFP Executive Board had approved $1.3 million for the Initiative. One speaker requested information on the means of financing the Initiative for its first two years and beyond, including the search for partners to provide financial resources. Another delegation expressed concern about financing the Initiative from regular resources, requesting that the regular resources allocation should not exceed $1 million and that other costs should be financed through other resources. It was also suggested that UNICEF should play a key role in raising funds for implementation and to ensure success of the initiative. The Director replied that UNICEF financial support to the secretariat would be incorporated within the frameworks approved by the Executive Board. The stated budget was for the small joint secretariat; country-level support would be covered though the normal Board-approved country programmes.

145. Several delegations emphasized the need for national ownership, including action plans tailored to countries' capacities, and requested more information on how Governments would be involved in the Initiative as partners. The need for greater emphasis on building national capacities and sustainability was stressed.

146. A delegation asked for a stronger reflection of the human-rights based approach, and of how the Initiative would function in humanitarian and difficult environments. Protection issues should also be better addressed. The secretariat replied that the human rights-based approach was reflected in the Global Framework document and would be strengthened. Support during humanitarian crisis would also be made more explicit in the Framework.

147. A number of questions were asked about reporting: if there would be separate reports on the Initiative to the Board or if progress would be discussed in the Executive Director's annual report, or if there would be joint reporting by UNICEF and WFP; if there would be new targets and indicators or those in the MTSP would be used; and the reports should include an analysis of national involvement and ownership and information on partnerships. In addition, many delegations requested intensification of partnerships at country and global levels and said they should avoid duplication of efforts. The Director said that the Initiative would be based on existing indicators and targets and would work with the United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition in that area. In terms of reporting, existing channels would be used, particular the Executive Director's annual report.

148. See annex, decision 2007/9 for the decision adopted by the Executive Board.

F. The UNICEF evaluation policy: oral report

149. The Director of Evaluation presented the report, in which he explained that the submission of the comprehensive evaluation policy had been postponed until the first regular session of 2008 pending the outcome of the organizational review. He outlined five key measures to be taken to strengthen evaluation in light of the findings of the evaluation peer review undertaken in 2006 and the organizational review process.

150. Delegations welcomed the policy direction, underscoring the centrality of evaluation to UNICEF programmes and achieving good results for children. Among their recommendations were rigourous follow-up to the peer review recommendations; maintaining close dialogue with delegations during the drafting of the policy, and examining lines of reporting to the Board; ensuring the independence of evaluation and reporting; securing management response to all evaluation recommendations; and adherence to United Nations norms and standards for evaluation. In response to concern about the 'co-location' of the audit and evaluation functions, the Executive Director said that co-location was meant to improve coordination of the two functions, especially with regards to field work. She also reassured the delegation that co-location would have no impact on the respective funding of the two functions.

G. Proposals for UNICEF programme cooperation

(a) Draft country programme documents

151. The Director of Programme gave a general introduction of the CPDs, analyzing trends and overall progress.

Eastern and Southern Africa

152. The Regional Director introduced the draft CPDs for Comoros and Malawi (E/ICEF/2007/P/L.2 and E/ICEF/2007/P/L.3) and the short-duration programme for Burundi (E/ICEF/2007/P/L.4).

153. The representative of Burundi cited the Government's commitment to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, as evidenced by the declaration of free access to primary education and health care, and stressed the need for more resources for HIV sector in the protection of infants. Another speaker cited the programme's strong linkages to peacebuilding, the priority given to girls' development and the focus on collaboration with United Nations agencies and the United Nations Integrated Office. One delegation said there should be more emphasis on the quality of education and asked for clarification on the child soldier demobilization strategy. The Regional Director replied that the issue of educational quality would be taken seriously, but the education programme should be seen in the context of the country's recovery phase. Access to primary education was part of the demobilization effort and the massive returns of refugees. To a request for more information on the HIV strategy, he said there was a continued focus on HIV/ AIDS for youth under the recovery process.

154. The representative of Comoros underscored the importance of the country programme's focus on women's representation and active participation in national decision-making at all levels. Another speaker expressed support for the effectiveness of immunization efforts and disaster prevention. A question was raised about the feasibility of the objectives for education. The Regional Director said that the ambitions of the country programme, particularly in education, were a product of broad partnership and collaboration with bilateral and other partners.

155. The representative of Malawi stressed the need for more attention to children with disabilities. Another speaker cited the programme's attention to advocacy and its well-articulated programme areas including malaria prevention, nutrition and immunization. Concern was expressed about aligning broad programme objectives with national goals with respect to the poverty reduction strategy paper. There was also interest in greater focus on upstream policy. One delegation stressed the need for a strengthened internal capacity for UNICEF in malaria prevention and suggested an increase in core-funded posts. The Regional Director said that the needs of disabled children in Malawi were part of the national development agenda. He cited UNICEF support in the development of the National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children and the piloting of cash grants that has been integrated in national policy as examples of UNICEF support to upstream policy work. UNICEF recognized the importance of the contribution made by the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief in Malawi.

West and Central Africa

156. The Regional Director introduced the draft CPDs for Cameroon, Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Sierra Leone (E/ICEF/2007/P/L.5, E/ICEF/2007/P/L.7, E/ICEF/2007/P/L.8 and E/ICEF/2007/P/L.9) and the short-duration programmes for Côte d'Ivoire, Niger and Nigeria (E/ICEF/2007/P/L.10, E/ICEF/2007/P/L.11 and E/ICEF/2007/P/L.12). She said that the CPD for Equatorial Guinea (E/ICEF/2007/P/L.6) had been withdrawn pending finalization of the UNDAF.

157. The representative of Cameroon said that because poverty was a major obstacle to education and health, the Government had declared primary education free for all children.

158. The representative of Mali stressed the numerous measures taken by the Government, including national policies on education and girls' education; a multisectoral plan to combat HIV/AIDS; bilateral agreements with Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Senegal to combat child trafficking; and laws on birth registration and female genital mutilation. Another speaker said that the CPD was too vague and general, and with the exception of immunization, the programme achievements focused more on inputs and activities than on results. The results presented for the previous period could be considered weak in view of the resources invested. She highlighted the weakness of the proposed indicators for monitoring and evaluation, especially in the area of child protection.

159. The representative of Sierra Leone said that the programme reflected the Government's priorities for post-conflict recovery and development. He noted past achievements, including the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration of almost 6,000 children, and stressed the need to give greater priority to children with disabilities.

160. The representative of Côte d'Ivoire said that the recent peace accords created a more favourable environment for children. A draft law on child trafficking would soon be submitted to Parliament. Another speaker suggested that the programme emphasize child protection more, including institutional support and policy development.

161. The representative of Nigeria said that the country has achieved universal salt iodization, had adopted a new national gender policy and was finalizing a maternal neonatal and child health strategy and an education policy. Another speaker stressed the importance of polio eradication in the last endemic countries and praised the Nigeria programme for prioritizing this objective.

162. The representative of Guinea-Bissau cited the important role played by National Committees for UNICEF in supporting the country programme.

163. The representative of Niger said that the new poverty reduction strategy had a strong focus on children. Another speaker cited the excellent work carried out by UNICEF in the area of nutrition, and suggested a stronger emphasis on prevention of malnutrition and hygiene.

Americas and the Caribbean

164. The Regional Director introduced the draft CPDs for Bolivia, Cuba and the Eastern Caribbean multi-country programme, including Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago (E/ICEF/2007/P/L.13, E/ICEF/2007/P/L.14 and Corr.1 and E/ICEF/2007/P/L.15).

165. The representative of Bolivia said that the CPD was the result of joint efforts of his government, the United Nations and civil society and reflected the National Development Plan. He added that UNICEF was becoming the driving force within United Nations coherence efforts to benefit children. Another speaker expressed support for the consultative process used in developing the CPD and commended its strong link to the MTSP. However, UNICEF could do better on reporting results and building the capacities of national and civil society counterparts.

166. The representative of Cuba said that UNICEF had provided valuable support in helping his Government achieve major progress on social indicators and the Millennium Development Goals. The Government was working with UNICEF to minimize costs and increase direct interventions to benefit all children.

167. Speaking on behalf of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States and two other countries, a delegation welcomed UNICEF efforts to engage in a participatory dialogue with the Caribbean Missions to the United Nations on issues of relevance to the region. She welcomed the multi-country programme's strategic priorities and its balance between similarities and disparities between countries in the region. The representative of Trinidad and Tobago said that a strengthened UNICEF presence would assist the Government in achieving the programme's planned results. She suggested a strengthened partnership with the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. The representative of Suriname said that there had been positive achievements but more remained to be done.

East Asia and the Pacific

168. The Regional Director introduced the draft CPDs for Malaysia and Papua New Guinea (E/ICEF/2007/P/L.16 and E/ICEF/2007/P/L.17) and the short-duration CPD for Timor-Leste (E/ICEF/2007/P/L.18).

169. The representative of Malaysia highlighted his country's achievements for children and underscored remaining challenges including improving data collection to enhance evidence-based policies, closing the gaps in access to social services among children in remote and rural areas and improving community capacities for emergency preparedness. His country's commitment to partnership with UNICEF was illustrated by the establishment of the National Advisory Committee on the future role of UNICEF in Malaysia and the Committee's leadership role in proposing alternative funding and operational arrangements for the UNICEF presence.

170. The representative of Papua New Guinea praised the initiative of the United Nations Country Team to work more coherently with the Government and bilateral donors, but expressed his Government's disappointment at not being chosen as a pilot country for United Nations system-wide coherence. His government was still seeking to have one consolidated CPD considered by the Executive Boards of UNICEF and UNDP/UNFPA. A group of delegations aligned themselves with his statement and expressed regret that the three agencies had not been able to accommodate the explicit request of the Government to submit a single integrated CPD. The draft CPD did not refer to the integration with the programmes of UNDP and UNFPA. The Secretary a.i. of the Executive Board said that the secretariats had complied with relevant decisions of the Executive Boards and the General Assembly, and if revised guidance was provided, either by the Assembly through the triennial comprehensive policy review, or by the Board, the secretariat would act accordingly.

171. A delegation expressed concern about the absorption capacity of the Timor-Leste programme and requested information on how the work of United Nations partners, NGOs and bilateral donors was coordinated. Another speaker praised UNICEF for its work in coordinating the water and sanitation sector and provision of emergency water services to internally displaced persons at the time of crisis. The Regional Director replied that UNICEF had the capacity to use and absorb funds effectively and had a successful track record in being able to use those funds effectively.

South Asia

172. The Regional Director introduced the draft CPDs for Bhutan, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka (E/ICEF/2007/P/L.19, E/ICEF/2007/P/L.20, E/ICEF/2007/P/L.21 and E/ICEF/2007/P/L.22).

173. The representative of Bhutan thanked UNICEF for its focus on health, education and child-related, which complemented government efforts. Another delegation stressed the importance of providing maintenance tools, kits and training for water, sanitation and hygiene promotion. UNICEF should invest more in planning and technical implementation of water and sanitation structures to restore sustainability.

174. The representative of India said that her country had made great achievements in the area of child development, but still faced the challenges of disparities, social inclusion and sharing the fruits

of economic development. Another speaker said that more than 25 per cent of the financial resources allocated to UNICEF programme delivery over five years in India were linked to United Nations system-wide coherence, and the UNDAF provided an excellent opportunity to continue this. She supported the shift from projects to programme and policy at both state and national levels. A delegation said that lessons learned from the ongoing evaluation of the Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illness Programme were not reflected in the CPD. The finding of this evaluation should be considered before scaling up the programme, and these concerns should be discussed in the revised CPD. Other issues raised were polio eradication, the need for a stronger focus on the girl child and the model of sanitation applied in India. Several delegations stressed the importance of addressing social exclusion, mainly in the poorest states. UNICEF should strengthen partnerships with other agencies and work with the Government on its programmes rather than working as a stand-alone agency.

175. Several delegations commended UNICEF for its work in Sri Lanka in the areas of health, nutrition and water, environment and sanitation. They encouraged UNICEF to double its efforts in the area of child protection and to cooperate more with government authorities in this sector. One delegation commended UNICEF for its contribution to the Secretary-General's report on children in armed conflict in Sri Lanka, but requested that the report's findings, as well as the recommendations of the report of Security Council Working Group on Children in Armed Conflict, be reflected in the revised CPD. UNICEF should continue to participate in the sector-wide approach to advocate for the implementation of a rights-based approach to programming to reach the most marginalized and poorest children. Another delegation said that the issue of child soldiers should be highlighted more in the programme. A speaker suggested that the cross-cutting strategies of the MTSP, the human-rights based approach, gender equality and results-based management be developed further. Another delegation asked about the programme's alignment with the country's Health Master Plan.

Middle East and North Africa

176. The Regional Director introduced the draft country programmes for Djibouti, Jordan, and Palestinian women and children in Jordan, Lebanon, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the Syrian Arab Republic (E/ICEF/2007/P/L.23, E/ICEF/2007/P/L.24 and E/ICEF/2007/P/L.25), and the short-duration programmes for Lebanon and Sudan (E/ICEF/2007/P/L.26 and E/ICEF/2007/P/L.27).

177. The representative of Djibouti said that the most recent demographic survey demonstrating progress in the lives of children had been validated in 2006. Another speaker requested that more detailed plans be developed for reducing infant and maternal mortality, female genital mutilation and improving poor child nutrition. The CPD should also delineate the work and financial contributions of other donor agencies.

178. The representative of Jordan reaffirmed her Government's commitment to international conventions and stated that with time, education and advocacy, discrimination due to social behaviours and norms could be changed. She mentioned the recent appointment of Queen Rania as the first UNICEF Eminent Advocate for children, and reiterated the Queen's appeal for the children of Iraq. At a cost of $1 billion annually, the Government was facing challenges in providing adequate basic services for over 750,000 displaced people and children of Iraq.

179. The representative of Sudan praised UNICEF for its high professionalism and looked forward to more cooperation and coordination. In response to a statement by the delegate on the recent positive results of a 2006 survey, the Regional Director confirmed that the figures would be updated. Another speaker said that gender analysis was needed for each programme component.

180. The delegate from the Syrian Arab Republic appreciated UNICEF efforts to meet the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi and Palestinian populations of his country and of the region. With modest resources, the Government was currently hosting 1.4 million refugees, of whom some 35 per cent were children aged five to eight years.

181. The representative of Lebanon described his country's commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals despite the setbacks of the 2006 hostilities, which had destroyed infrastructure and had immense ecological and economic repercussions. Almost 40 per cent of the population did not have regular access to adequate and safe water supply and the water supply was vulnerable to sewage contamination. The education and primary health care sectors, particularly in Southern Lebanon, had been devastated.

182. Speaking about Palestinians living in Lebanon, he said that recent attacks on the Palestinian refugee camps had led to the suffering of more than 27,000 displaced Palestinians. He reminded the Executive Board of the recent appeal to the international community for $12.7 million for essential food and non-food assistance. The Regional Director said that the Executive Director had released $500,000 from the Emergency Programme Fund to support the programmes in Lebanon, in coordination with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

183. Referring to the programme for Palestinian women and children in Jordan, Lebanon, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the Syrian Arab Republic, the representative of Palestine acknowledged the harm to Palestinians, including children, resulting from internal Palestinian conflict; however, mentioning this in the same paragraph that described the consequences of 40 years of occupation implied equal responsibility for the current dire situation. Another speaker requested more details on the most common forms of violence facing children and reiterated the need to provide gender perspectives on vulnerabilities. A delegation requested clarification on funding and coordination between UNICEF and UNRWA, and suggested that the programme include details on increasing access to services for the integrated management of childhood illness, as well as emergency preparedness plans. The Regional Director said that UNRWA was the lead agency for the Palestinians, and UNICEF provided support in such specific areas as training of teachers and child-friendly schools.

184. The Executive Board approved the aggregate indicative budgets for the full country programmes, and approved the short-duration programmes (see annex, decision 2007/10). The President informed the Board that revised versions of the full CPDs would be prepared, based on the comments made, as appropriate, and would be posted on the internet within six weeks of the session. The documents would be approved by the Board at the first regular session of 2008 on a no objection basis, unless five members had informed the secretariat in writing of their intention to discuss a particular country programme.

(b) Recommendation for additional other resources for approved country programmes

185. The recommendation (E/ICEF/2007/P/L.28) was introduced by the Director, Programme Division and approved without comment. (See annex, decision 2007/11.)

H. Progress report on implementation of the UNAIDS Global Task Team recommendations that are of relevance to UNICEF: oral report

186. The report was presented by the Senior Advisor, HIV/AIDS. She said that although progress on the implementation of the GTT recommendations had been variable, there were concrete examples of UNICEF addressing its accountabilities under the recommendations. The recommendations had been endorsed relatively recently and it was still too early to expect major impact at country level.

187. Delegations welcomed the background paper that had been provided outlining UNICEF follow-up to the UNAIDS Technical Division of Labour, the establishment of joint United Nations teams on AIDS at country level, the progress on addressing bottlenecks to procurement and supply management and the work around the Global Implementation Support Team. They expressed continued support for the "Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS" strategic framework and highlighted the importance of an integrated approach to reach the Millennium Development Goals. While progress was being made in the area of prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, much more needed to be done. There must be a comprehensive response including the provision of sexual and reproductive health services to HIV-positive couples. Speakers underscored the importance of joint programming at country level, and expressed interest in future updates on harmonization at country level. A specific request related to the UNICEF experience with joint United Nations teams on AIDS, how inter-agency collaboration was reflected within staff performance management systems and the specific actions undertaken to promote greater harmonization and alignment through joint programming, such as harmonization of business practices and standardizing overhead costs.

I. Harmonized format for results-based budgeting for UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF: oral report

188. The presentation was made by the Deputy Director of the Division of Financial and Administrative Management. The background paper, including a mock-up of the biennial support budget in the proposed format, had been developed jointly with UNDP and UNFPA.

189. Delegations expressed support for the principle of results-based budgeting and welcomed the proposal to present the biennial support budget in the results-based format for the 2008-2009 biennium. Speakers highlighted the advantages of adopting a results-based format, including focused attention on results rather than inputs, greater accountability and transparency on the use of resources to achieve results and increased budget effectiveness and management. It was acknowledged that adopting results-based budgeting was a challenge and several Governments had adopted it progressively. UNICEF should continue to progressively strengthen its results-based management and budgeting and further strengthen the linkage of management results with the MTSP. Clarifications were sought on reporting, impact with respect to shift of resources allocated to programme countries

and the use of cost recovery. One delegation said that the move to results-based budgeting should not affect the earmarking of resources to beneficiary countries. Another speaker said that sufficient level of detail within the results-based format should be available in the biennial support budget presentation, to allow for informed decision-making.

190. The Deputy Director said that a results-based presentation had already been implemented for programme resources; each CPD had a results matrix, with its linkage of resources and results, and was approved individually by the Executive Board. The biennial support budget represented a small proportion of overall resources and covered only key functions to support the operational activities of the organization at all levels. The results-based presentation would more clearly link the functions funded by the biennial support budget functions with effective programme delivery and the MTSP. The introduction of results-based budgeting for the biennial support budget would not impact the allocation of regular programme resources, which continued to be based upon the formula approved by the Executive Board. The cost recovery received from other resources was part of the gross resources as presented in the biennial support budget, and used to support the totality of the management structure. The net budget, after deduction of the recoveries, was funded from regular resources. UNICEF will continue to report on results through the Executive Director's annual report.

191. The Board adopted the following oral decision:

The Executive Board recalls its decision 2006/2 and takes note of the revised biennial support budget (BSB) format as proposed in the informal mock-up budget document and requests the Executive Director to present a preliminary draft BSB, based on information available, in the results-based format for the consideration of the Executive Board at its second regular session of 2007.

J. Report of the joint field visit to Liberia by members of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP

192. The joint field visit report (E/ICEF/2007/CRP.7), accompanied by a video, was set in the context of a special focus session on Liberia, which considered the opportunities and challenges facing that country as it makes the transition from post-conflict peacebuilding and reconstruction to sustainable development. Panellists included H.E. Ms. Paulette Bethel, Permanent Representative of the Bahamas to the United Nations and team leader of the joint field visit; H.E. Mr. Toga McIntosh, Minister of Planning of Liberia; Mr. Jordan Ryan, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Liberia and Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General; Mr. Oscar A. Avalle, Special Representative a.i. of the World Bank to the United Nations; and H.E. Mr. Nathaniel Barnes, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Liberia to the United Nations. The session was also attended by members of the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA.

193. The report was introduced by Ambassador Bethel, who said that the visit had been a rich and enlightening experience. She and the other panellists pointed to several accomplishments of the country, notably in education and immunization, and in the development of the interim poverty reduction strategy. The United Nations agencies had also made considerable progress in "delivering as one," though much greater efforts were required in ensuring coherence among them. Panellists said that urgent support was needed for the country's planned improvements in services, infrastructure, legal and judicial governance, partnership-building and data-gathering, including the carrying out of

the planned national census. This support was critical in light of a future drawdown by the United Nations Mission in Liberia. The strategic priority was to ensure Liberia's self-reliance.

194. Delegations echoed many of these concerns in the discussion that followed. One speaker said her delegation was overwhelmed by the magnitude of Liberia's challenges and promised technical cooperation, while several others called for immediate and substantial funding for the country. Several speakers noted significant gains made, including through "delivering as one". Nearly all interventions emphasized the need for greater harmonization among United Nations agencies and other partners. Calls were also made for the development of national capacities to meet social demands and debt relief.

K. Address by President of the Global Staff Association

195. The President of the Global Staff Association commended the dedication of the nearly 10,000 UNICEF staff worldwide, saying that the main items affecting staff were United Nations coherence and the organizational review of UNICEF. Staff strongly supported efforts towards United Nations coherence, but were concerned that the identity and niche of UNICEF not be lost. Staff agreed with the broad aims of the review, and would continue to support and follow management's direction, as long as they were confident that the integrity of the organization was preserved and UNICEF delivery of assistance and advocacy were not compromised.

L. Other matters

Programme of work for the second regular session

196. The Secretary a.i. of the Executive Board gave an update on the agenda for the second regular session, scheduled for 5-7 September 2007, noting the addition of two items requested by the Board at this session: a report on the organizational review and a preliminary draft of the biennial support budget in the results-based format.

Preparations for the commemoration of the General Assembly Special Session on Children

197. Deputy Executive Director Kul Gautam reported on preparations for the commemorative high-level plenary meeting, which would take place 11 and 12 December 2007. Noting the enthusiasm shown for the meeting, he said that 99 countries had already shared their national progress reports on the "World Fit for Children plus 5", all of which would eventually feed into a major report on progress for children. A draft resolution that would outline specific arrangements for the meeting was under discussion.

M. Closing statements by the Executive Director and the President

198. The Executive Director said that the drive for better results was at the heart of discussions at the annual session and at the heart of UNICEF-supported programmes. A greater focus on results had

been evident in her annual report on implementation of the MTSP, and in the accompanying statistical document, which would be continued in future.

199. The discussion on Liberia had highlighted the importance of the work of the United Nations and UNICEF in a post-conflict country, and UNICEF and its partners would continue to support the country. The new education strategy, with its emphasis on quality and girls' education, would be put to the test in countries like Liberia. The adoption of the Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative was also appreciated, as nutrition was critical to UNICEF work. In protection, she noted several UNICEF initiatives, including support for the demobilization of children formerly associated with armed groups.

200. Concerning the recent report from the Board of Auditors concerning United Nations operations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, she said it had identified only two issues related to UNICEF. To improve operations, UNICEF, along with several other organizations, had recently shifted to local currency. The Executive Director stated that UNICEF would follow the recommendations of the Board of Auditors.

201. She paid tribute to Ado Vaher, Secretary a.i. of the Executive Board and Director of United Nations Affairs at UNICEF, who had joined the organization in 1990 and would retire in August, saying that he had done an "outstanding job".

202. The President closed the session by saying that it had benefited from the high degree of cooperation and participation of delegations, which, he added, should be maintained in the future so that the Board could continue its strategic guidance to UNICEF.

Part three
Second regular session of 2007

Held at United Nations Headquarters from 5 to 7 September 2007

I. Organization of the session

A. Opening of the session

203. The President of the Executive Board opened the session by praising the catalytic and leadership role of UNICEF in promoting achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, knowledge generation and dissemination, and policies for children.

204. The Executive Director, in her opening remarks, described the engagement of UNICEF in several key partnerships that were helping to mobilize action on the Millennium Development Goals, improve health outcomes in developing countries, and promote inclusion through sports. She emphasized the need for credible data, including through more frequent multiple indicator cluster surveys. She noted the upcoming report on States' progress in implementing the *World Fit for Children* Declaration and Plan of Action in advance of the General Assembly plenary session on this topic, to be held in December 2007. She also announced appointments for several senior posts: Ms. Sigrid Kaag, Regional Director for Middle East and North Africa; Mr. Daniel Toole, Regional Director for South Asia; Ms. Cecilia Lotse, Director for Governance, United Nations and Multilateral Affairs; Mr. Stefan Zutt, Director of Information Technology; and Ms. Kirsi Madi, Secretary of the Executive Board.

B. Adoption of the agenda

205. The Executive Board adopted the agenda, timetable and organization of work (E/ICEF/2007/13 and Corr.1) for the session.

206. In accordance with rule 50.2 of the rules of procedure, the Secretary of the Executive Board announced that credentials had been submitted by 40 observer delegations.

II. Deliberations of the Executive Board

A. Proposals for UNICEF programme cooperation

Approval of country programme documents discussed at the annual session of 2007

207. The President stated that, in accordance with decisions 2002/4 and 2006/19, the Board had commented on the draft CPDs and had approved the indicative budgets for 18 country programmes at the annual session of 2007. The draft CPDs for the full-duration programmes were then revised, taking into consideration, as appropriate, comments made by delegations during that session. The revised CPDs were posted on the UNICEF website within six weeks after that session. The revised CPDs were to be approved on a no-objection basis, unless five members informed the secretariat of their wish to bring any country programme before the Board. The President had been informed that no such comments were received.

208. Therefore, the country programmes were approved for Bhutan, Bolivia, Cameroon, the Eastern Caribbean multi-country programme, Comoros, Cuba, Djibouti, Guinea-Bissau, India, Jordan, Maldives, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka and for Palestinian children and women in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Draft country programme documents

209. The Director of Programme Division gave a brief overview of the 17 CPDs, and 1 subregional programme funded from other resources, being presented at the session. The President then reviewed the process for approval of the CPDs (see paragraph 208 above).

Eastern and Southern Africa

210. The Regional Director introduced the draft CPDs for Lesotho, Madagascar, Rwanda and Somalia, and a short-duration programme for Botswana, (E/ICEF/2007/P/L.36 to P/L.40).

211. The representative of Lesotho stated that the country was affected by the combined detrimental effects of poverty, food insecurity and HIV/AIDS, and noted that the Government had called for assistance from the international community regarding the state of emergency in food security. In addition to taking steps to improve food security, the Government was focusing on maternal mortality and social protection policy and legal frameworks, especially those helping children affected by HIV/AIDS. Progress was evident in the newly created computerized national birth registration system, which included the registration of orphaned children.

212. The representative of Botswana singled out the good technical support provided by UNICEF in child protection, survival and development. She cited successes in fulfilling national objectives for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission through routine antenatal HIV testing and counselling, as well as the attainment of school enrolment objectives for orphaned and other vulnerable children (OVC). As noted in the MTR, more urgent support is needed for the most vulnerable children, adolescents and women, including those affected by HIV/AIDS.

213. The representative of Rwanda stated that while some progress had been made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, assistance continued to be needed for complex problems caused by HIV/AIDS and the genocide that had taken place, especially relating to OVC, youths and joblessness. As a country piloting the One United Nations process, Rwanda was committed to its success and noted that UNICEF priorities for children had been integrated into the new framework, objectives and roles for United Nations agencies. One aspect that was fundamental to future progress was education for all Rwanda's children.

214. Several delegations noted the success of the One United Nations process in Rwanda and asked for a uniform CPD format across participating United Nations agencies. Requests were also made for more clarity on resource allocation at local levels.

215. The representative of Somalia acknowledged the post-conflict needs of sustained dialogue with partners, and rehabilitation and reconstruction following more than a decade of conflict. The

cooperation with UNICEF will enhance children's four basic needs - health, education, equality and protection - as well as the reduction of maternal mortality and child malnutrition, which are two critical areas.

216. Other speakers on the Somalia CPD noted the good coordination, quality and clarity of analysis, and donor collaboration, especially in the United Nations transition plan. More emphasis should be placed on government capacity-building in child protection and on female genital mutilation. Several delegations commented on the shift from a humanitarian to a development role in that country. More information was requested concerning the capacity of UNICEF as a cluster leader versus its capacity as implementer in-country.

217. The representative of Madagascar cited recent plans undertaken with partners to intensify efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, the Madagascar Action Plan and reform initiatives. Priority attention will be given to addressing critical challenges such as maternal mortality and infant and child mortality due to malaria, pneumonia, diarrhoea and malnutrition. Technical assistance from UNICEF was encouraged so that health data and planning for the country programme could be improved. Another delegation asked for more clarity on the issue of low-absorption capacity.

218. All speakers commended UNICEF for the technical support and collaborative efforts that had contributed to the high quality of the documents.

219. Responding to the points made on Somalia, the Regional Director said that UNICEF was prepared for a permanent presence in Mogadishu and for taking on implementation whenever the security situation permits. Staff safety was the priority.

West and Central Africa

220. The Board had before it the draft CPDs for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, (E/ICEF/2007/P/L.41), Equatorial Guinea (E/ICEF/2007/P/L.6), Liberia (E/ICEF/2007/P/L.42) and Togo (E/ICEF/2007P/L.43). These were introduced by the Regional Director.

221. The representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo highlighted the numerous challenges facing children in that country, due to the armed conflict, socio-economic crises, and political instability that had prevailed in previous years. He stressed the particular constraints in the area of disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration of children, and the various measures devised by the Government to address these. He further noted the crucial role played by international partners in supporting national efforts, and emphasized the importance of the development of a broad framework of cooperation aligning more than 90 per cent of official development assistance to the country, thus allowing more donor coherence and impact in development.

222. The representative of Liberia stressed the fact that the country was emerging from a relief phase and entering the crucial stage of reconstruction and development, and would therefore require careful attention from the international community. He highlighted his Government's commitment to poverty reduction. Concrete solutions were needed to address the challenges of massive unemployment, poverty, delivery of social services, maintaining a governmental

authority throughout the country and the rebuilding of basic infrastructure. Advances in these areas were necessary conditions for sustainable peace, stability and development.

223. The representative of Togo noted recent progress in the social sector, including the eradication of diseases such as tetanus and polio; the reduction of the HIV prevalence rate from 6 per cent in 2002 to 3.2 per cent today; an increase in the school enrolment rate, to 74 per cent; and improvement in the gender parity ratio. She expressed hope that the upcoming legislative elections would encourage donors to reinstate official development assistance, suspended in the 1990s.

224. Three speakers commented on the draft programme for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, noting the relevance of the programme to the post-crisis situation of the country. One speaker requested more details on the programme's target groups and regions, on the concrete measures envisioned to reach objectives, and on specific programme activities and on partnerships, including the UNICEF partnership with Caritas and with churches, which operate more than half the country's schools. The CPD might have included a risk analysis of factors that could affect achievement of the objectives.

225. Another speaker singled out the "ambitious" plans to increase school enrolment and completion rates and praised the two-pronged strategy of UNICEF of supporting the education sector at different levels (national, provincial and local) while actively participating in sector reform at the global level. He encouraged UNICEF to play a stronger role in donor harmonization and coordination.

226. The third speaker encouraged UNICEF to emphasize decentralization in engaging with provincial authorities and civil society. He stated a concern that the selective coverage of zones in the programme could create imbalances among regions. He also encouraged UNICEF to work in synergy with other United Nations agencies.

227. One speaker highlighted his country's provision of 9.5 million mosquito-repellent bed nets to Africa since February 2005, making it possible to reach the objective of 10 million bed nets by December 2007. His country was also committed to the eradication of polio, providing support mainly in Nigeria for the period 2007-2008. He encouraged UNICEF to ensure adequate donor visibility regarding the assistance received.

228. In her response, the Regional Director emphasized UNICEF commitment to promoting donor coordination in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. She also said that many of the specific requests for information on the CPD would be answered in the Country Programme Action Plan. Since UNICEF could not support service delivery in the entire country, targeted zones were determined largely on the basis of the vulnerability of children. UNICEF worked very closely with other United Nations agencies and took decentralization into account.

The Americas and the Caribbean

229. The Regional Director introduced the draft CPDs for Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Nicaragua, and the Pro-inclusion subregional programme funded from other resources, as well as

two short-duration programmes for Haiti and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (E/ICEF/2007/P/L.44 to P/L.50).

230. The representative of Colombia noted that emerging policies and national plans - such as implementation of the new Law on Children and Adolescents - presented further opportunities to ensure children's rights. The country programme aligned with the UNDAF, and the majority of its strategies converged with those of the National Development Plan and the Decennial Programme for Children. She encouraged UNICEF to support implementation of the country's national policies and initiatives for children and to build national capacity. It was important to create joint mechanisms to review and adjust the country programme and to ensure transparent coordination between UNICEF and various levels of Government. The prioritization of several departments/regions should not ignore other areas in need. While the CPD included most of the Government's comments, several adjustments would be proposed in the MTR regarding prior results and experiences, recent institutional developments and implementation, additional actors, and resource mobilization.

231. Another speaker commended the four priorities identified in the draft CPD for Colombia, recommending more information on monitoring and evaluation. Sustained coordination among different actors, both within and outside of the United Nations system, was crucial for humanitarian action, including protection. In expanding its field presence in Colombia, UNICEF should consult and collaborate with other humanitarian actors already well-decentralized in Colombia, such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNHCR, and WFP.

232. The Regional Director replied that the strengthened field presence was not only being coordinated with these agencies and with authorities but had also been recommended by the United Nations country team.

233. Pointing to the draft CPD's description of the alarming situation of women and children in her country, the representative of Haiti expressed hope that countries would work with UNICEF in support of *A World Fit for Children*. Despite stagnating indicators and the political instability of the last few decades, her Government, with UNICEF contribution, was able to achieve several positive results (such as increased vaccination and reduced infant and child mortality), but problems remained. Low school attendance and literacy rates were sources of concern for her Government, which had therefore undertaken a number of measures to ensure that all students had an equal chance of success. These measures included a school canteen programme, the distribution and subsidization of supplies and materials, and rehabilitation of schools, emphasizing disabled children.

234. Another speaker asked about finalization of the PRS process in Haiti. Referring to the draft CPD's statement that UNICEF had taken over as supplier of basic hardware and materials and needed to recruit additional international staff in this area, the speaker highlighted his Government's understanding that this assignment should be for a short-term period. Information was requested on how the harmonized approach to cash assistance would be implemented and how it would affect programme management.

235. The representative of Costa Rica reasserted his country's commitment to improving the quality of life and opportunities offered to children and adolescents. The CPD reflected the

strategic alliance contributing to Government priorities in support of the Millennium Development Goals and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The country's Development Plan included a focus on children living in poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion. The Government was taking several actions to improve education and health services, including those aimed at reducing maternal mortality and malnutrition. International assistance was crucial in addressing the country's stagnant poverty levels and inequality, yet Costa Rica was excluded from the list of countries that benefited from official development assistance and from debt-forgiveness programmes.

236. The representative of Mexico reaffirmed her Government's commitment to the objective of all children growing up healthy and protected, able to develop their potential, and exercising all their rights, as reflected in the National Development Plan. She commended the contribution of UNICEF to Government's efforts to improve access to education and health services and to strengthen the protection of children against violence, abuse and exploitation. She also commended the support given by UNICEF to the promotion of social dialogue and agreement regarding equity and children's rights. The public policy programme of UNICEF had led to the development of the Index for the Rights of Mexican Children and had helped to strengthen the culture of children's rights through information campaigns and legislative reforms. She also praised the results achieved through the All Children in School strategy, as well as the CPD component on child protection, and the objective of developing national capacity to address inequalities.

237. The representative of Argentina said that UNICEF had played a strong role in working with the Government to better develop public policies for children and adolescents. UNICEF was in a unique position to promote children's rights. As a middle-income country, Argentina required support and technical cooperation to address social and economic inequality. UNICEF activity in middle-income countries was not always easy to measure and should be guided by principles that include the rights-based and gender equality approaches. South-South cooperation was important, and Argentina would collaborate closely with UNICEF and others in the Pro-inclusion subregional programme.

238. The Regional Director confirmed that UNICEF would soon reach an agreement on South-South cooperation with Argentina, which had a great deal of capacity to share.

239. Several delegations commented on the CPD for Nicaragua, welcoming its alignment with national, regional and local priorities identified during the UNDAF process, which took place with active participation of local actors and donors and was based on the country's development programmes. One speaker requested clearer linkages between the CPD's priorities and the social and political realities in Nicaragua. Another speaker recommended that the CPD situation analysis include more information on women's rights and sexual and reproductive health rights, and their relation to infant and child mortality. It was also noted that, while UNICEF was a signatory of the code of conduct, the organization had not entered into the joint financial mechanism for programme execution.

240. Another speaker recommended that the focus and priorities be sharpened in "knowledge, research and advocacy" and inquired about UNICEF disengagement from areas outside its core mandate.

241. Regarding sector-wide approaches (SWAps), speakers praised UNICEF for its leading role in the education SWAp; encouraged a similar role in the development of one for water and sanitation; inquired about possible overlaps in SWAp activities; and requested information on the role of UNICEF in financing and on efforts at avoiding parallel processes.

242. The Regional Director replied that a main concern in SWAp was insufficient investment; UNICEF avoided creating parallel actions; and more dialogue could take place on UNICEF contribution to the SWAp process in light of the limited resources available.

243. Delegations also encouraged UNICEF to enhance coordination with UNFPA, particularly on HIV/AIDS, education and health. The high level of coherence and cohesion achieved among agencies should be reflected in the CPDs of UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA, which should have been presented by the three agencies simultaneously at their respective Board sessions. The Regional Director replied that the lack of CPD co-timing was due to the organizations' internal administrative issues and timing rather than to a lack of inter-agency coordination.

244. The representative of Chile said that achieving Millennium Development Goals 4, 5 and 6 was a priority for her Government and should be given greater attention. Responding to her question on South-South cooperation, the Regional Director mentioned several successful examples: cooperation on HIV/AIDS in Paraguay; the sharing of HIV/AIDS treatment by Brazil; and the recently signed agreement between Paraguay and Chile on birth registration, reached in the context of the partnership between the IADB, the Organization of American States, Plan International and UNICEF to ensure universal birth registration in the region by 2015. It was hoped that an agreement on South-South cooperation would be reached with Chile.

245. Responding to a question on UNICEF coordination with WHO and private foundations, the Regional Director said the vast collaboration with PAHO included a vaccination campaign focusing especially on indigenous children, which had reached more than 50 million people. Collaboration took place with the Clinton Foundation, particularly in HIV/AIDS.

East Asia and the Pacific

246. The draft CPD for the Pacific Island multi-country programme – document E/ICEF/2007/P/L.51 – was introduced by the Regional Director.

247. The representative of Papua New Guinea, on behalf of the Pacific Forum Group, requested a significantly increased amount of regular resources for the Pacific. He stated that donor harmonization was critical for ensuring aid effectiveness with the United Nations family. Citing the urgent need for better coordination and joint programming, he encouraged UNICEF to work more closely with other United Nations agencies to "deliver as one" in the Pacific. The development of the joint five-year country programme action plan to improve monitoring, evaluation and programme management was welcomed. He encouraged more engagement by UNICEF in (a) upstream policy dialogue and advocacy, and (b) health and education SWAps in priority countries in the Pacific. Regarding the plan of UNICEF to establish a Pacific network of analysts, he expressed the hope that several of them would be drawn from the Pacific region.

248. Another delegation encouraged UNICEF to strengthen its dialogue and cooperation with bilateral donor countries in the region.

249. The Regional Director replied that the Pacific network of analysts and experts would include those from the region. UNICEF would follow up on strengthening cooperation with the bilateral agencies at the country level.

South Asia

250. The former Regional Director for South Asia introduced the draft CPD for Nepal, document E/ICEF/2007/P/L.52.

251. The representative of Nepal said the country programme was aligned with national priorities and would help his country to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

252. Several delegations expressed support for the decentralized approach on actions for children and women and for UNICEF engagement in the education sector. They also welcomed the emphasis on marginalized groups and on reducing disparities as a way to enhance the peace process and social development.

253. Other delegations recommended that UNICEF engagement in the SWAp process be enhanced and that the water and sanitation sector focus on children; that malnutrition be addressed in the health and nutrition component; that the country programme align with the UNDAF; that greater attention be given to programme management, monitoring and evaluation; and that capacity-building be supported at district levels.

254. Several delegations noted with appreciation that the country programmes for Nepal and Sri Lanka addressed the issue of child soldiers. They welcomed the joint efforts to establish a national strategy for the release, return and reintegration of child soldiers in Nepal, and highlighted the need for its implementation. In addition, issues of child labour, the girl child, gender disparity, and children with disabilities should be fully addressed in the country programmes for Nepal and Sri Lanka. One delegation said that the country programme for Sri Lanka should include an increased focus on child protection and the human rights-based approach.

255. In response, the Regional Director said that in Nepal UNICEF focused on strengthening capacity at district level but responsibility for this lay with the Government. UNICEF was cooperating with a number of partners to focus on marginalized groups, using indicators to track changes. She also highlighted efforts to improve schooling for working children and the engagement of UNICEF in the education SWAp. These supported Government efforts to ensure compulsory education for all children and quality in education. UNICEF would continue to strengthen efforts addressing gender disparity, with a focus on girl child, and children with disabilities and marginalized populations. Much effort had been devoted to the release, return, rehabilitation and reintegration of children affected by conflict, both in Nepal and Sri Lanka.

256. The indicative budgets of all the draft country programmes presented were approved in decision 2007/12 (see annex).

257. In a statement made under "Other matters" (item 18) on behalf of her delegation and two others, a speaker requested that adequate time and attention be given to ensuring a constructive dialogue between UNICEF and the Executive Board, especially between Regional Directors and the Board, regarding the draft CPDs.

Overexpenditure

258. The Board had before it document E/ICEF/2007/P/L.53, which was introduced by the Comptroller, outlining $7,137,112 in overexpenditure for completed projects financed by other resources for which no additional support had been forthcoming.

259. The recommendation was approved in decision 2007/13 (see annex).

Recommendation for approval of additional regular resources for approved country programmes

260. The Board had before it document E/ICEF/2007/P/L.54. The recommendation was approved in decision 2007/14 (see annex).

B. Regional summaries of midterm reviews and major evaluations of country programmes

261. The Executive Board had before it the reports on summaries of mid-term reviews and major evaluations for Eastern and Southern Africa (E/ICEF/2007/P/L.29); West and Central Africa (E/ICEF/2007/P/L.30); the Americas and Caribbean (E/ICEF/2007/P/L.31); East Asia and the Pacific (E/ICEF/2007/P/L.32); South Asia (E/ICEF/2007/P/L.33); Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (E/ICEF/2007/P/L.34); and the Middle East and North Africa (E/ICEF/2007/P/L.35). These were introduced by the respective Regional Directors. The South Asia report was introduced by the former Regional Director, and the Middle East and North Africa report was introduced by the Deputy Regional Director.

262. After an overview by the Director of the Evaluation Office, several delegations said that they found the reports useful, descriptive and well structured, presenting a better balance of what has worked and what has not. There had been progress in the quality of reports. The sections addressing "Use made of evaluations" were helpful, as was the reporting on measures taken to strengthen the evaluation function at regional and country levels. These assessments, as well as those found in the reports' conclusions, could inform development of the UNICEF evaluation policy to be reviewed at the first regular session in January 2008.

263. Delegations said it would be useful to know how the secretariat chose the evaluations and their relationship to regional characteristics and strategies, the Millennium Development Goals, United Nations reform processes, children's rights, the MTSP, and other issues. It would also be useful to have more explicit descriptions of the purpose of each evaluation, the degree of

independence of the evaluation teams, the adequacy of methodologies used, and the experiences drawn from the use of a wide range of methodologies.

264. It was noted that reporting still emphasized inputs rather than outcomes and should instead focus more intently on results, impact and sustainability. In addition, regional reports should not simply recast a synthesis of the evaluations but should distil lessons that could be disseminated.

265. Speakers also emphasized the need for information on how UNICEF systematically followed up on MTRs and evaluations over a multi-year period.

266. Speakers also stressed the importance of regional evaluation networks and associations, and the importance of continuing to build capacity in evaluation.

267. On the report for East Asia and the Pacific, two delegations expressed support for steps being taken by UNICEF in this region and in South Asia to improve the quality of evaluation. The delegations welcomed the joint efforts of the two regional offices to establish the United Nations Evaluation Group for Asia and the Pacific, asking for more information on this initiative. The delegations expressed approval of the proposal to hire an additional evaluation specialist in the regional office. UNICEF was urged to continue to strengthen its evaluation function, evaluation training, and capacity development and to encourage national ownership of evaluation.

268. The representative of China, referring to the evaluation of salt iodization in his country, noted the priority his Government gave to the elimination of iodine deficiency disorders and described actions taken to reach universal salt iodization, particularly in geographical areas lagging behind. The continued support of UNICEF in these efforts was welcome.

269. The Regional Director expressed support for efforts being made to improve the quality of evaluation in both regional offices, and for the offices' contributions to the establishment of the United Nations Evaluation Group for Asia and the Pacific. More information on this initiative would be given to the Board members.

270. On the report for South Asia, the representative of Pakistan noted with appreciation the MTR of the UNICEF-Pakistan country programme, which demonstrated overall improvement in the condition of children and the progress made towards achieving several Millennium Development Goals. She elaborated on the initiatives and legislation undertaken by the Government to improve the well-being of children and women.

271. The representative of Bangladesh expressed his appreciation for the evaluation included in the report and the efforts made by UNICEF and Government to support the integrated community development project in three districts of Bangladesh. He emphasized the importance of cooperation and coordination among stakeholders.

272. On the report for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, all speakers commended the valuable work of UNICEF in the region and reaffirmed the useful findings and recommendations for issues such as child poverty, juvenile justice, education, girls' education and child trafficking. Speakers also emphasized the economic diversity of the region and the importance of continued cooperation with UNICEF, including in middle-income countries, especially in the areas of child protection, juvenile justice and deinstitutionalization of

orphans. It was critical for UNICEF not only to provide technical support but also to promote cooperation among countries in the region.

273. Speaking of the MTR for his country, the representative of Tajikistan said it was important to encourage the participation of local and national institutions in the planning of social development initiatives and the broad participation of communities and families.

274. Regarding the potential effect of the organizational review on the regional office, one delegation pointed out the important and catalytic role of the regional office in United Nations system-wide coordination, coherence and support to programme implementation.

275. In response, the Regional Director gave assurance that the shifts introduced by the organizational review would improve the regional office's support to country offices and would improve the response of country programmes, including those of middle-income countries, to evolving realities. The Regional Director acknowledged the importance of regional cooperation, which was moving ahead in such areas as evaluation methods, child protection and HIV/AIDS, though much more could be done.

276. On the report for the Middle East and North Africa, the representative of Palestine, referring to the MTR for the 2006-2007 area programme for Palestinian children and women in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, expressed concern over the absence of the word "occupation". She said significant problems of food insecurity, poverty, malnutrition, and anaemia as well as the closures, curfews and military operations had resulted from 40 years of occupation. The representative further requested UNICEF to review paragraph 12 of the MTR regarding the inability of the Palestinian National Authorities to pay salaries.

277. The representative of Lebanon, also speaking on the MTR for the 2006-2007 area programme, expressed concern that the document did not mention "occupying force", as the situation of women and children in Palestine had developed from occupation. It was important to place the plight of the Palestinian children in the right context.

278. Referring to paragraph 12 of the same MTR, one delegation praised the important work of UNICEF and expressed concern that UNICEF was working with civil society groups that included Hamas. The speaker encouraged UNICEF to promote peace education.

279. The representative of Iraq thanked UNICEF for its assistance to the children of Iraq and congratulated UNICEF for the most recent multiple indicator cluster survey, the figures of which were contained in the document. She requested that a survey be conducted to assess the situation of Iraqi refugee children in Jordan.

C. Organizational review of UNICEF

280. As requested in the annual session of the Executive Board, in June 2007, the Executive Director shared the organization's response to the consultant's report on the organizational review. The Board members had before them a report (E/ICEF/2007/CRP.16) highlighting the views of

the secretariat, the status of implementation, the impact on UNICEF presence in the field, the rationale for proposed changes, and implications for the 2008-2009 biennial support budget.

281. In introducing the report, the Executive Director explained that most of the recommendations of the review validated ongoing efforts to further sharpen the organization's focus on results, particularly the organization's progress in reaching targets of the MTSP and the Millennium Development Goals. She noted that UNICEF was currently examining the sequencing of the implementation activities. Areas of priority included (a) improving technical assistance to the field; (b) integrating programme-related functions; (c) enhancing knowledge management, including the research function; (d) streamlining the country programme planning process; (e) revitalizing the Situation Analysis of Children and Women; (f) simplifying business processes; and (g) investing in staff training and development.

282. Speaking on behalf of the African Group, the Vice-President of the Board stated that the recommendations and management's response adhered completely to the African Group's expectations by enhancing the capacity of the organization to adapt, to exploit new opportunities and to deliver better results for children.

283. The Executive Director noted that Africa was a critical priority for UNICEF, which invested about 50 per cent of its resources in the region.

284. Overall, delegations said that the update provided a comprehensive view of the organization's response to the consultant's report on the organizational review, and they commended UNICEF for demonstrating transparency and commitment to continual improvement.

285. It was noted that the **MTSP for 2006-2009** was the guiding framework for UNICEF for the upcoming biennium, and that the aim of the organizational review was to help to enhance the organization's capacity to deliver results consistent with the MTSP.

286. Several delegations inquired about the **budgetary implications** of the proposed changes. The Executive Director explained that the review provided a strategic direction centred on doing business better; therefore, it would be difficult to isolate a monetary figure for each proposed change. She added that UNICEF was preparing a biennium support budget document, which would be shared with the Board members at the next Board session, in January 2008.

287. In response to a question regarding the **impact of the proposed changes on UNICEF field offices,** including the financial implication for country programmes, the Executive Director reaffirmed that the changes would strengthen UNICEF performance in the field, and should not negatively affect country programmes financially. This did not, however, imply a status quo. The organizational review provided a number of suggestions on how UNICEF effectiveness at the country level could be improved through more strategic thinking and more efficient business processes.

288. Regarding UNICEF involvement in the area of **youth and adolescents**, the Executive Director stated that this would continue to be a key focus for UNICEF. Given that the number of middle-income countries continued to grow, UNICEF needed to strengthen its technical capacity to do more upstream work, including, for example, in child protection and juvenile justice.

289. Several delegations emphasized the importance of the continued focus of UNICEF on issues around **child survival**, and the Executive Director concurred. Responding to a question on whether the changes in the organizational set-up would risk diminishing the momentum on polio and malaria eradication, the Executive Director indicated that these critical diseases would remain a priority for UNICEF, but that a more strategic and integrated approach would help the organization to reach mothers and children more effectively, for example by using health clinics to distribute insecticide-treated bed nets during vaccination visits.

290. Several delegations requested further elaboration on the **flexible use of core resources and the development of fund-raising packages.** The Executive Director explained that access to flexible funds was a must if UNICEF wanted to be more strategic. Many donors continued to earmark resources for activities and projects, and mobilizing resources towards upstream work had been a challenge. Building on the recent success of thematic funding, UNICEF planned to develop a range of fund-raising packages aimed at more effectively communicating the results of UNICEF work, including the impact of working at the system, policy and community levels.

291. Regarding questions related to **research functions**, including the selection of research agenda, and the role of Innocenti Research Centre (IRC) and the Global Research Advisory Board, the Executive Director explained that UNICEF would professionalize the research function as a key strategy in providing global knowledge leadership for children. IRC would remain a key player, and its role would be complemented by a broader research effort, including through improved collaboration with external research partners. A more detailed implementation plan would be developed in the coming months.

292. One delegation recommended that UNICEF make better use of the **evaluation** function and find better ways of disseminating knowledge within the organization.

293. Regarding technical assistance, several delegations requested additional information on structural changes at the regional level, the type of technical support regional offices would provide to country offices, and linkages with other headquarters divisions such as Programme, Policy and Practice. The Executive Director said that after much discussion on the possibility of setting up a **technical hub**, it was eventually decided not to pursue this option at this time. Various models of technical assistance had been proposed by the regional offices, which would be tested and refined throughout the next biennium. For instance, the offices for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States and for the Middle East and North Africa were proposing to share advisory capacities in economic analysis and in partnerships. The All Africa Meeting in 2006 had exemplified significant technical collaboration between the Africa Regions as well as between the regions and Programme Division at headquarters.

294. Several delegations welcomed the proposed establishment of the **Field Support Unit**. The Executive Director stated that this was a new "pilot" entity, and work on the structure and relationships with other offices/divisions was under way.

295. One delegation inquired about the **Geneva Regional Office**, which had been merged with the Private Sector Division to form a new entity called Private Fund-raising and Partnerships. The Executive Director indicated that the new arrangement was expected to improve support to and coordination with the National Committees for UNICEF, who formed a critical component of

UNICEF work. The new arrangement was also intended to stimulate new forms of results-driven partnership with the private sector, civil society and foundations – which was essential in the changing architecture of development financing and partnerships. One delegation noted that the organizational review team had consulted virtually all National Committees.

296. Several delegations said that the section on partnerships was the most important part of the report, but that it lacked operational details. Clarification was sought on how the proposed shift around partnership would improve existing partnerships or create the recommended global strategic framework. The delegations said they looked forward to reviewing the report on strategic partnership, expected to be presented at the June 2008 session.

297. One delegation highlighted the importance of the role of UNICEF in identifying good practice on **south-south collaboration**.

298. Several delegations inquired about the proposed simplification of the **country programme planning process** and how UNICEF envisaged **working with other United Nations agencies**. While the report highlighted the importance of enhancing strategic partnerships, a linkage with other United Nations agencies was not well articulated. The Executive Director said that as UNICEF improved its own planning process, it could better participate in the United Nations country team work, including the UNDAF process. She added that collecting and analysing lessons learned from **"delivering as one" pilots** would be critical in understanding what does and what does not work. In some pilot countries there may be an overemphasis on internal process and not enough work on sharply delineating the substantive contribution of the United Nations country team.

299. Regarding simplification of **business processes**, several delegations said that in the creation of units and posts it was not clear where streamlining and rationalization was taking place. The Executive Director noted that this would be a priority in the coming months.

300. The **realignment of the Programme Group** to reduce sectoral silos was well received. The Executive Director explained that UNICEF was putting mechanisms in place to streamline and simplify complex policy and process instructions from headquarters to the field. This would include a review of existing policies and procedures to determine their value relative to their compliance burdens.

301. Inquiries were made about the added value of establishing the two new **principal advisor posts:** Resource Policy and Global Strategy. The Executive Director explained that traditionally UNICEF had focused on the short- and medium-term time horizons rather than on long-term strategy. The role of the advisor for Global Strategy was to help UNICEF to recognize longer-term transformational shifts and seize opportunities as they arose. The role of the advisor for resource policy was to examine the sources and uses of the various income streams and help to match resources with UNICEF priorities.

302. Several delegations from Asia expressed concern that the proposed integration of the two Asia regional offices might diminish UNICEF work, particularly in South Asia. The Executive Director stated that developing some common resources for the two regions (e.g., in certain technical assistance areas) was a pilot initiative to respond to issues affecting the broader Asian region, and much fresh thinking would be undertaken under the new Director of the Regional

Office for South Asia. UNICEF was encouraged to strengthen the office's capacity to provide support to country offices, given the large numbers of children in the region.

303. While welcoming the establishment of a dedicated **Change Management Unit,** several delegations suggested developing an **action plan** to ensure clarity of direction and timely progress on the implementation plan.

304. Several delegations requested ongoing consultation. The importance of engaging staff as critical partners in the change process was also underlined. The Executive Director said that UNICEF would hold **informal consultations** with the Executive Board before the next Board session in January 2008.

305. The Executive Board adopted decision 2007/15 on the organizational review (see annex).

D. Results-based budgeting: preliminary draft of the biennial support budget

306. The preliminary draft document E/ICEF/2007/CRP.15 was introduced by the Comptroller. Speakers welcomed the draft submission of the budget in a results-based format that included key performance indicators, and also welcomed the decrease in the ratio of support budget to total use of resources. It was suggested that a report was needed on cost classification among the agencies. Clarifications were sought on how the increase in the gross support budget would be utilized. Another delegation noted that the report did not provide detailed budget figures. The Comptroller responded that the budget figures were being finalized for submission to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and to the Executive Board at its January 2008 session, with full details to be provided on the proposed changes. This presentation was essentially a sharing of work-in-progress, as requested by the Executive Board at its annual session in June 2007. As for cost classification, UNICEF had used the definitions which had been harmonized with UNDP and UNFPA since 1999.

307. The Board took note of the preliminary draft document.

E. Medium-term strategic plan: planned financial estimates for 2007-2010

308. The document E/ICEF/2007/AB/L.4 was introduced by the Comptroller. The planned financial estimates for the period 2007-2010, which provide a basis for determining the level of regular resources programme submissions for approval in 2008, was welcomed. Clarifications were sought on the rationale for the estimated increase in regular resources from Governments. A more detailed explanation was also sought regarding the proposed $30 million set-aside for the after-service health insurance (ASHI) liability, given that this was not an immediate liability that must be paid out by UNICEF. Further information was requested on the position of UNICEF regarding future transfers of this kind.

309. The Comptroller responded that the value of the ASHI liability was $292 million, a figure based on an actuarial study performed in conjunction with other United Nations agencies in 2005. UNICEF had been funding the liability for the past three years and its funding level was comparable to that of other United Nations agencies, including UNDP (46 per cent funded),

UNFPA (36 per cent funded) and WFP (72 per cent funded). The United Nations Secretariat had funded 0 per cent on its ASHI liability, an amount that exceeded $2 billion. The Comptroller indicated that UNICEF had a legal liability to pay the ASHI benefits in the future and expected to have 51 per cent of the liability funded by the end of 2007.

310. The Board approved the framework of planned financial estimates for 2007-2010 and the preparation of programme expenditure submissions to the Executive Board of up to $1,652 million from regular resources in 2008. In addition, the Board approved an exceptional increase of $30 million in the annual transfer to the funded reserve for after-service health insurance in 2007.

311. The Board adopted decision 2007/16 (see annex).

F. Implementation of Executive Board decision 2007/4 on crisis management and business continuity capacity

312. The Director of the Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS) presented the report (document E/ICEF/2007/AB/L.11), which focused on three areas: (a) the strengthening of the capacity for business continuity (BC) in UNICEF for all types of disasters and crises; (b) the identification of a suitable alternate IT remote data centre; and (c) the level of coordination and partnership with other United Nations entities. In addition, Board members were updated on the status of the development of a Business Continuity training package, an initiative led by UNICEF with the technical support of WFP, which will benefit inter-agency cooperation and support.

313. The Director stated that UNICEF was on track with the BC plan. A Business Continuity Unit had been established within EMOPS New York. An internal directive calling for the establishment and institutionalization of BC within UNICEF had been issued by the Executive Director. Business Impact Analysis and Risk Assessment exercises for New York headquarters had involved various divisions and key staff members. An independent study was under way to determine the best location for the Alternate Site Data Remote Centre, to which UNICEF will transfer its current back-up data centre.

314. The Director emphasized the importance of cooperation among agencies and with regional agencies such as the Asian Development Bank. Through the UNICEF-WFP technical partnership, a senior Business Continuity specialist had been seconded to UNICEF.

315. One delegation noted the partnership with United Nations agencies in developing the BC training package, which all interested United Nations agencies should use to expedite results and efficiencies.

G. Private Sector Division financial reports and statements for the year ended 31 December 2006

316. The Director a.i. of PSD presented the report (E/ICEF/2007/AB/L.10).

317. Several delegations, as well as the representative of the Standing Group of National Committees, commended UNICEF and the National Committees for the strong financial results

achieved in 2006, especially regarding the growth of regular resources, and recognized the positive working relationship between the Committees and the Divisional leadership. Speakers expressed appreciation for the transparency of the report and the Director's comments, as well as for the information handout on PSD investment funds.

318. It was noted that rigorous management of operating expenses was critical for any fund-raising organization, and that efforts to explore efficient alternative business models for managing cards and products, including outsourcing, were welcomed.

319. One delegation requested that card sales data be included as part of the financial report, and queried the growth in National Committee and country office retention. The Director a.i. noted that, as card sales were managed by National Committees on a consignment basis, reporting delays impacted the Division's ability to report sales volumes in the financial report. The increases in retention were due primarily to the exchange rate impact of the weakened dollar.

320. The Executive Board took note of the report.

H. Status report on implementation of Executive Board decision 2007/3 on the recommendation of the Board of Auditors

321. The document E/ICEF/2007/AB/L.7, introduced by the Comptroller, describes the further progress achieved by UNICEF towards implementing the recommendations of the Board of Auditors and provides an update on the implementation of the main recommendations, as well as information about the total year-end unexpended funds, the rising levels of other resources contributions and the development of common services.

322. A suggestion was made that UNICEF strive to improve the forecasting used in developing the MTSP, as well as the level of oversight exercised by headquarters and regional offices. It was also noted that while UNICEF should take an active involvement in developing common services to reduce costs and increase programme spending, accountability must always be maintained. It was further noted that National Committee funds should be used only to fund UNICEF activities and not the activities of other agencies. Another delegation noted that the level of the year-end cash balance was high and that other resources were expected to continue to increase in size and as a proportion of UNICEF funds. It was noted that the cash balance would continue to be monitored and to be compared with other agencies, and that any further recommendations made by the Board of Auditors on this issue should be closely reviewed.

323. The Comptroller acknowledged that UNICEF needed to improve its forecasting and said that the planned financial estimates for 2007-2010 included forecasts developed with greater rigour. Oversight practices had been enhanced and were now performed quarterly in the early part of the year and monthly in the last quarter. The Comptroller clarified that UNICEF resources were used only to fund UNICEF activities. In common services circumstances, UNICEF partnered with other organizations to accrue savings for its operations, and it did not provide funding to others. Regarding the high cash balances, in accordance with the Board's policy, UNICEF would continue to request funds in advance for other resources activities in order to protect regular

resources programmes, but UNICEF will also review what other agencies were doing in this regard.

324. The Board took note of the report.

I. Internal audit

325. The Executive Board had before it the report on internal audit activities in 2006 (E/ICEF/2007/AB/L.8), which was introduced by the Director, Office of Internal Audit (OIA), and the response by management to address key and recurrent audit findings that remained unresolved for more than 18 months (E/ICEF/2007/AB/L.9).

326. The Director, OIA, pointed out that since the submission of the report on internal audit activities in 2006, some progress had been made by audited offices and divisions to address some of the recommendation that had remained unresolved for more than 18 months. In addition, on the basis of the resource analysis contained in part VII of the OIA report, OIA had requested additional resources, which were endorsed in the recent budget exercise. With the additional resources, which will be available from 2008, OIA will be in a position to provide the expected level of assurance.

327. One delegation, also speaking on behalf of 14 other delegations, acknowledged the progress made in the presentation of the report by OIA, including the supplementary information on OIA resources and risk-based audit planning. The delegation welcomed the increase in audits of headquarters divisions and systems and suggested a more comprehensive management response in the future.

328. In support of statements made in the OIA annual report, the delegation emphasized the benefits of adopting an organization-wide risk management policy, risk-mapping, and risk management practices as part of a broader risk management framework. These would assist OIA in focusing audit resources on the most critical areas. The delegation requested management to provide more details as to who would lead the process and when the risk management policy would be implemented. Concern was expressed about the lack of significant improvements in audit findings in several areas. An organizational risk management policy would bring about a better understanding by office managers of the risks attached to UNICEF operations.

329. The delegation also suggested that the new anti-fraud policy and whistleblower policy be supplemented by a more comprehensive anti-corruption and communication strategy to help to bring about better accountability and transparency.

330. The delegation requested more information about management plans to address the continuing high proportion of high-risk observations in the area of finance and accounts, weak implementation of audit recommendations, and other audit areas. As these trends seemed to indicate systemic problems, the delegation urged UNICEF to identify the causes of negative audit trends, and address those causes in the ongoing reform work, especially through the adoption of an organization-wide risk management framework.

331. The delegation supported statements in the annual report calling for a new accountability framework, and requested more details on how this framework and the risk management

framework would be developed as mutually reinforcing instruments. A fuller and more comprehensive management response to the annual audit review would be appreciated.

332. Another delegation expressed appreciation for the high level of detail in the OIA annual report, and urged management to take it seriously. The delegation requested UNICEF to describe its plans to address weakness related to the lack of standard needs-assessments for emergencies and requisitioning practices.

333. Both speakers supported the provision of adequate resources to the Office of Internal Audit in the next biennial support budget.

334. In response, the Deputy Executive Director (Operations) assured delegates that UNICEF management was taking audit findings very seriously. Management was equally concerned about the level of poor audit ratings, and would use the current renewal process to make systemic improvements.

335. To improve financial management in field offices, UNICEF was currently combining finance and accounting instructions and guidance into a single online Financial Management Policy Manual. A new field support office would help to strengthen fraud awareness and provide training, including in financial management. Special guidance and training on financial management in emergencies was being developed. Technical competencies of staff involved with financial management were being improved. These measures would be complemented by a proposal for strengthening oversight functions, including the development of better systems for tracking results.

336. Three major initiatives would help to address overall weaknesses identified in audits: (a) the ongoing simplification and harmonization of business processes; (b) an updated accountability framework; (c) the introduction of a risk management framework, for which terms of reference had been prepared and for which funds had been set aside in the next budget.

337. The Director, OIA, confirmed that the introduction of an anti-corruption policy was a high priority, and OIA was in contact with other United Nations organizations on this issue. While UNICEF had many risk management in practices in place, these were often fragmented and not coordinated. OIA was working with other United Nations organizations to access the latest thinking on organizational risk policy and methodologies.

J. Decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2007 that are of relevance to UNICEF: oral report

338. The report was presented by the Director, a.i., United Nations Affairs and External Relations. Among the issues highlighted were support to countries for poverty eradication and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals; the establishment of the Development Cooperation Forum; and the promotion of full and productive employment and decent work for all. No delegations took the floor.

K. UNICEF follow-up to the United Nations Study on Violence against Children: oral report

339. The report was presented in the context of a special focus session on child protection. The Executive Director opened the session, underlining that child protection was a priority in all countries and that child survival and child protection needed to go hand in hand. The UNICEF Chief of Child Protection made a brief oral report on follow-up to the United Nations Study on Violence against Children, highlighting progress made in the areas of capacity-building, legal reform, gender, improved national data collection and research, and the strengthening of national planning.

340. Mr. Anders Johnsson, Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), spoke on the partnership between IPU and UNICEF, noting that child protection and children right's issues were mainstreamed in all IPU-led activities. The jointly published handbooks on protection issues had contributed significantly to the work of parliamentarians globally, and the Child Protection Handbook had been translated into more than 15 languages.

341. The Tony Award-winning playwright and actress Sarah Jones gave a one-woman performance on "What Parliamentarians Can Do about Violence against Children".

342. In the discussion that followed, a number of delegations requested that high priority and resources be devoted to the implementation of the recommendations of the study, which constituted the framework for the child protection strategy. The Board asked to be kept informed about related processes.

343. Issues highlighted by delegations included the need to emphasize the strengthening of national systems; support to family care, such as parenting programmes; prenatal care; the role of boys and men; violence in cyberspace; the elimination of corporal punishment; birth registration; gang violence; and the role of UNICEF in legislative reform. Promoting social change was important not only for female genital cutting (FGC), but also for many other aspects of child protection. In the area of juvenile justice, it was recommended that UNICEF move beyond judicial proceedings. One speaker noted the complexity of trafficking, the lack of data, linkages with other crimes, and inter-familial violence as a root factor. FGC was noted as a particularly complicated issue to address, requiring a transformation of attitudes. Two delegations raised the issue of the plight of children under foreign occupation. Regarding reproductive health services, one speaker stated his delegation's position that these do not include abortion. A representative of the NGO Human Rights Watch, speaking on behalf of the NGO Advisory Council on follow-up to the study, asked for support for the establishment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children to guarantee a multisectoral approach to the follow-up.

344. In their responses, panellists stressed that the family was a child's first line of defence and that strengthening family support services was a cornerstone of child protection. The approach of UNICEF to child protection reached beyond legal proceedings. Community-led approaches towards the abandonment of FGC were being replicated as good models. No children, including those living under foreign occupation, were excluded from protection.

L. UNICEF child protection strategy: oral report

345. In her oral report, the Chief of Child Protection presented the key elements of the child protection strategy being developed: improved child protection data, analysis, and evaluation; strengthened technical guidance; national protection systems; supportive societal change; protection during conflicts and natural disasters; and strengthened partnerships. The strategy supports the MTSP and incorporates recommendations of the United Nations Study on Violence against Children, indicating where UNICEF can add the greatest value in their implementation.

346. Overall, delegations signalled their full support for the approach, in particular the focus on strengthening child protection systems and capacity, and the emphasis on the involvement of the health and education sectors, with one delegation noting the importance of inter-sectoral linkage.

347. A number of delegations suggested that the strategy further explore partnerships that could strengthen child protection. Speakers referred to the development of the *United Nations Guidelines for the Appropriate Use and Conditions of Alternative Care for Children* as an example of a broad-based and well-coordinated initiative. Additional suggestions on how to strengthen the strategy included consideration of the outcomes of the consultation on child care-system reform, in Sofia, Bulgaria; increased attention to the role of the United Nations system in implementing the strategy; a stronger focus on adolescents and child participation; and the incorporation of a timeline and clear objectives to allow for monitoring of the strategy's implementation. Two delegations expressed their concerns about the under-funding of child protection in comparison to other UNICEF priority areas; it was suggested that UNICEF use the next MTSP midterm review to consider increasing the resources allocated.

348. One delegation from the region requested UNICEF support in mainstreaming a child rights perspective into the curricula of a training centre opened by the Government and the International Organization for Migration to combat human trafficking.

M. UNICEF follow-up to recent consultations of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board: oral report

349. The Director of Programme Division gave an oral report on the issues of relevance to UNICEF at the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) meetings, which took place in June 2006, December 2006 and June 2007, respectively. Despite progress made on implementation, several recommendations involved changes at institutional level, which would take more time to achieve. Bottlenecks would be reviewed collectively within UNAIDS as part of the Global Task Team (GTT) assessment implementation plan and internally through the implementation of the recommendations of the organizational review.

350. Delegations commended UNICEF for its participation in the joint United Nations teams on AIDS, where the division of labour was based on capacity rather than physical presence. They expressed appreciation for UNICEF involvement in new innovative partnerships, such as the International Drug Purchase Facility. The delegates encouraged continued data collection and analysis to further guide the impact of cash transfers. Delegations expressed their continued support for the Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS strategic framework (four Ps) and

welcomed the 2008-2009 Unified Budget and Workplan as a strong accountability mechanism. UNICEF was encouraged to play a more active role in HIV prevention among young people, in close collaboration with UNFPA, and to continue ensuring that gender equity and quality were achieved in national AIDS responses. Requests were made for information on UNICEF follow-up to the GTT assessment.

351. One delegation, speaking also on behalf of 10 other delegations, said the delegations looked forward to receiving an update, at the January 2008 Board session, on UNICEF involvement in harmonization and alignment in joint programming and operating procedures and systems at country level, and on how inter-agency collaboration was reflected in UNICEF staff performance appraisal systems.

N. Programme of work for Executive Board sessions in 2008

352. The draft programme of work for Executive Board sessions in 2008 (E/ICEF/2007/14) was introduced by the Secretary of the Executive Board. One delegation requested that the scheduling of the second regular session take into account the timing of the General Assembly. The programme of work was adopted in decision 2007/18 (see annex).

O. Field visits

353. H.E. Mr. Robert Hill, Vice-President of the Executive Board (Australia), reported on the visit of the Bureau of the Executive Board to Kyrgyzstan (document E/ICEF/2007CRP.13). This was accompanied by a brief video on the visit. Mr. Hill commended UNICEF for its work in Kyrgyzstan, acknowledging the difficult situation and enormous changes the country is undergoing. The team was impressed by the results achieved by the office despite low levels of funding. There was concern about the fact that country office staff members were accountable for resource mobilization in addition to their other responsibilities.

354. The UNICEF Regional Director for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States then provided an overview of child protection-related issues in the region.

355. In the ensuing discussion, the delegation of Kyrgyzstan mentioned several priorities for the country: implementing the recently signed child code; improving health; strengthening families; and upgrading monitoring systems. One delegation from the region highlighted the need for reform of social welfare systems, the updating of data collection systems, and the revision of strategies and approaches. Another speaker from the region suggested strengthening legislative systems, capacity and services in order to bolster child protection systems and better training of peacekeepers on children's and human rights.

356. The report on the field visit of Executive Board members to Panama and Peru (E/ICEF/2007/CRP.13) was introduced by the Rapporteur, Ms. Ann Måwe (Sweden) and was accompanied by a brief video. Ms. Mawe highlighted the importance of continued support from donors and UNICEF in middle-income countries; the need for UNICEF to work upstream; and the special role UNICEF had to play in supporting social inclusion, especially of indigenous groups,

as well as decentralization and policies to reduce malnutrition and to end discrimination and gender equality.

357. The representative of Peru said that the support of UNICEF and donor countries was critical in a middle-income country like Peru. The technical support and training UNICEF provided to decentralization was essential in reducing poverty.

358. The representative of Panama expressed satisfaction with the visit and the additional opportunity it gave Panama to serve the region.

359. The Board took note of both field visit reports.

P. Other matters

Update on the follow-up to the Special Session on Children

360. Deputy Executive Director Kul Gautam summarized the preparations for the high-level plenary meeting and accompanying round tables being organized to evaluate progress made in implementing the Declaration and Plan of Action of *A World Fit for Children,* on 11 and 12 December 2007. This is part of the fifth anniversary commemoration of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children, which took place in 2002.

Q. Closing statements

361. The Executive Director emphasized the need for credible and detailed data to sharpen programmes, measure progress and achieve the Millennium Development Goals; and for partnerships in support of the rights and cause of children. She paid special tribute to Deputy Executive Director Kul Gautam, who has had "a long and distinguished career with the organization" since he joined in 1973 and who will retire at the end of 2007.

362. The President closed the session by noting the usefulness of the special focus session on child protection and the challenges ahead in keeping children safe from harm, abuse and exploitation. Partnerships, he said, will be crucial for this and all of UNICEF work. He also applauded UNICEF for moving ahead with the organizational review and other measures to improve programmes and procedures.

Annex

Decisions adopted by the Executive Board in 2007

2007/1. Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the Global Framework for Action for the Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative and decision 2006/EB.2/2 of the Executive Board of the World Food Programme, and encourages UNICEF to continue discussions with Member States and relevant partners on its further development;

2. *Recognizes* the Initiative's potential contribution to achieving Millennium Development Goal 1 in mobilizing the wider global partnerships required to end child hunger and undernutrition, in particular those aimed at developing more effective support to States in the implementation of national plans related to children's nutrition;

3. *Requests* UNICEF to ensure that the medium-term strategic plan (MTSP), including its support strategies, is the guiding framework for UNICEF involvement in the Initiative;

4. *Stresses* the importance of the finalization of the support strategies for other focus areas of the MTSP;

5. *Requests* UNICEF to develop and submit a report, no later than the annual session of 2008, on partnerships including an overview of existing partnerships;

6. *Requests* the Executive Director to submit at the annual session of the Executive Board in June 2007 a report for action on the following issues, in order for the Executive Board to review the role and involvement of UNICEF in the Initiative:

(a) The exact role, functions and responsibilities of UNICEF in the implementation of the Initiative and the division of labour amongst partners;

(b) Implications and consequences of the implementation of the Initiative on the capacity of UNICEF to achieve the organizational targets under each of the five MTSP focus areas at the global level as well as at country level;

(c) Implications and consequences of the implementation of the Initiative on the allocation of UNICEF core resources, including to country programmes;

(d) Implications of the Initiative for the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and poverty reduction strategy processes and subsequent programming activities of all United Nations funds and programmes at country level;

(e) Ways and means to ensure effective links between the Initiative and national plans regarding child hunger and undernutrition developed by States.

First regular session
18 January 2007

2007/2. Recommendation for additional regular resources for approved country programmes

The Executive Board

Approves a total of $70,597,708 in regular resources to fund the approved country programmes of 34 countries (as shown in document E/ICEF/2007/P/L.1) for 2007, whose regular resources planning levels, based on the modified allocation system and estimated global levels of programmable regular resources, are higher than the balance of approved funds for these countries.

Region/country	***Document E/ICEF/***	***Approved programme duration***	***2007 Planning level***	***2007 RR Balance***	***Additional RR to be approved***
			(A)	***(B)***	***(A-B)***
West and Central Africa					
Benin	2003/P/L.5/Rev.1	2004-2008	4,234,000	2,585,000	1,649,000
Cameroon	2002/P/L.3/Add.1	2003-2007	3,532,000	2,581,292	950,708
Côte d'Ivoire	2002/P/L.4/Add.1	2003-2007	4,903,000	3,566,000	1,337,000
Dem. Rep. of the Congo	2005/P/L.33	2006-2007	38,058,000	21,227,000	16,831,000
Guinea-Bissau	2002/P/L.5/Add.1	2003-2007	1,645,000	1,395,000	250,000
Liberia	2006/P/L.42	2007	3,770,000	2,826,000	944,000
Mali	2002/P/L.6/Add.1	2003-2007	11,968,000	6,492,000	5,476,000
Mauritania	2002/P/L.7/Add.1	2003-2008	1,804,000	1,549,000	255,000
Niger	2003/P/L.7 /Rev.1	2004-2007	14,354,000	8,222,000	6,132,000
Nigeria	2001/P/L.15/Add.1	2002-2007	29,303,000	21,311,000	7,992,000
Sierra Leone	2003/P/L.8/Rev.1	2004-2007	6,491,000	3,801,000	2,690,000
Togo	2006/P/L.11	2007	3,210,000	2,269,000	941,000
Subtotal by region					**45,447,708**
Eastern and Southern Africa					
Botswana	2002/P/L.1/Add.1	2003-2007	630,000	555,000	75,000
Burundi	2004/P/L.2	2005-2007	6,973,000	3,860,000	3,113,000
Comoros	2002/P/L.2/Add.1	2003-2007	743,000	668,000	75,000
Lesotho	2001/P/L.3/Add.1	2002-2007	1,034,000	959,000	75,000
Malawi	2006/P/L.3	2007	7,536,000	6,492,000	1,044,000
Rwanda	2006/P/L.5	2007	7,875,000	4,949,000	2,926,000
Somalia	2003/P/L.4/Rev.1	2004-2008	8,465,000	5,927,000	2,538,000
Subtotal by region					**9,846,000**
East Asia and Pacific					
Pacific Island multi-country programme	2002/P/L.10/Add.1	2003-2007	5,500,000	3,000,000	2,500,000
Papua New Guinea	2002/P/L.11/Add.1	2003-2007	1,430,000	1,326,000	104,000
Timor-Leste	2005/P/L.10	2006-2007	1,125,000	1,050,000	75,000
Subtotal by region					**2,679,000**

Middle East and North Africa					
Djibouti	2002/P/L.14/Add.1	2003-2007	790,000	715,000	75,000
Jordan	2002/P/L.15/Add.1	2003-2007	667,000	602,000	65,000
Palestinian children and women in Jordan, Lebanon, Syrian Arab Republic and the Occupied Palestinian Territory [1]	2005/P/L.20	2006-2007	4,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000
Sudan	2006/P/L.23	2007	7,649,000	6,169,000	1,480,000
Subtotal by region					**3,620,000**
Central and Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States					
Tajikistan	2004/P/L.17	2005-2009	2,218,000	2,026,000	**192,000**
Subtotal by region					
Americas and the Caribbean					
Bolivia	2002/P/L.8/Add.1	2003-2007	1,294,000	1,212,000	82,000
Colombia	2001/P/L.21/Add.1	2002-2007	892,000	817,000	75,000
Eastern Caribbean multi-country programme [2]	2002/P/L.9/Add.1	2003-2007	3,200,000	1,600,000	1,600,000
Haiti	2006/P/L.53	2007	3,024,000	2,749,000	275,000
Subtotal by region					**2,032,000**
South Asia					
Afghanistan	2005/P/L.36	2006-2008	26,257,000	24,548,000	1,709,000
India	2002/P/L.12/Add.1	2003-2007	32,579,000	28,995,000	3,584,000
Nepal	2006/P/L.14	2007	6,738,000	5,250,000	1,488,000
Subtotal by region					**6,781,000**
Total					**70,597,708**

[1] Includes operation lifeline Sudan.

[2] Includes Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

First regular session
18 January 2007

2007/3. UNICEF financial report and the audited financial statements for the biennium ended 31 December 2005 and the report of the Board of Auditors

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Board of Auditors (A/61/5/Add.2), the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors on the financial statements of the United Nations funds and programmes for the financial period ended 31 December 2005 (A/61/214/Add.1), and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A61/61/350);

2. *Welcomes* the unqualified opinion of the Board of Auditors on the UNICEF financial statements;

3. *Takes note of* the progress made by UNICEF in implementing the recommendations of the Board of Auditors for the biennium ended 31 December 2005, and the one ended 31 December 2003, and of the specific efforts made by management to improve transparency and to promote managerial accountability and ownership in dealing with audit recommendations;

4. *Requests* the Executive Director of UNICEF to build on progress achieved and to continue to implement the recommendations of the Board of Auditors in a timely way, and requests UNICEF to provide the Executive Board with a report at its second regular session of 2007 including: an overview of the strategic implications of the recommendations for the management and strategy of UNICEF, such as the implications of the significant increase in total year-end unexpended funds, the rising levels of other resources contributions and the development of common services; and an update on the implementation of the main recommendations;

5. *Takes note with appreciation* of the steps taken by the Executive Director to work with the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and other agencies to standardize their financial management in the context of the transition to International Public Sector Accounting Standards-based accounting, and requests to be informed on the progress of this work.

First regular session
18 January 2007

2007/4. Supplementary support budget for crisis management and business continuity capacity (document E/ICEF/2007/AB/L.1)

The Executive Board

1. *Approves* the supplementary budget in gross and net appropriations for the management and administration of $9.6 million to cover the additional costs in the 2006-2007 biennial support budget associated with the need to strengthen capacities for crisis management, business and operations continuity in the event of a protracted crisis such as a human influenza pandemic, and to protect staff health and safety, contingent upon evidence of further progress being provided to the Executive Board at its second regular session of 2007 with regard to the coordination and sharing of resources with other United Nations entities, including identification of a suitable data-centre site and a related analysis of relevant costs not yet ascertained;

2. *Requests* the Executive Director to report to the Executive Board on the implementation of this decision at its second regular session of 2007.

First regular session
18 January 2007

2007/5. Private Sector Division workplan and proposed budget for 2007

The Executive Board

1. *Approves* for the fiscal year 1 January to 31 December 2007 budgeted expenditures of $110.5 million as detailed below and summarized in column II of table 7 to document E/ICEF/2007/AB/L.3:

	(In millions of United States dollars)
Commissions – field offices	1.8
Cost of goods delivered	31.9
Marketing expenditures	33.6
Support services expenditure	21.8
Investment funds	21.4
Total expenditures, consolidated	**110.5**

2. *Authorizes* UNICEF:

(a) To incur expenditures as summarized in column II of table 7 to document E/ICEF/2007/AB/L.3 and to increase expenditures up to the level indicated in column III of the same table should the apparent proceeds from fund-raising and/or card and gift sales increase to the levels indicated in column III, and accordingly, to reduce expenditures below the level indicated in column II to the extent necessary, should the net proceeds decrease;

(b) To redeploy resources between the various budget lines (as detailed in paragraph 1 above) up to a maximum of 10 per cent of the amounts approved;

(c) To spend an additional amount between Executive Board sessions, when necessary, up to the amount caused by currency fluctuations, to implement the 2007 approved workplan.

A. Budgeted income for the 2007 season

The Executive Board

Notes that for the period 1 January to 31 December 2007, Private Sector Division net proceeds are budgeted at $463.3 million (regular resources) as shown in column II of table 7 in document E/ICEF/2007/AB/L.3.

B. Policy issues

The Executive Board

1. *Renews* investment funds with $21.4 million established for 2007;

2. *Authorizes* UNICEF to incur expenditures in the 2007 fiscal period related to the cost of goods delivered (production/purchase of raw materials, cards and other products) for the 2008 fiscal year, up to $32.5 million as indicated in the Private Sector Division medium-term plan (see table 6 of document E/ICEF/2007/AB/L.3).

C. Medium-term plan

The Executive Board

Approves the Private Sector Division medium-term plan as reflected in table 6 to document E/ICEF/2007/AB/L.3.

First regular session
18 January 2007

2007/6. Annual report of the Executive Director

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the "Annual report of the Executive Director: progress and achievements against the medium-term strategic plan" (MTSP) (E/ICEF/2007/9);

2. *Recognizes* that this is the first report on the MTSP 2006-2009;

3. *Welcomes* the progress that UNICEF has made to improve its strategic focus, the strong alignment of its activities with the MTSP and the recognition of the importance of results-based management;

4. *Welcomes* the progress made in countries supported by UNICEF in the five focus areas of the MTSP, but also recognizes that many countries, particularly countries in Africa, still face challenges in these areas, and in this regard urges UNICEF to continue to strengthen its support to these countries, with a view to tackling the remaining challenges;

5. *Appreciates* that the annual report gives an overview of the outcomes and results of the activities undertaken in the five focus areas of the UNICEF MTSP and of the linkages between results and resources, and further takes note of the accompanying data companion that defines key trends;

6. *Underlines* the importance of the annual report as a key part of the accountability framework to the Executive Board, particularly in reporting on results and outcomes in the implementation of the MTSP, while recognizing that the annual report should be complemented by analytical reports to the Board from the evaluation function on the contribution of UNICEF to development outcomes at the country level as well as on the aggregate level;

7. *Encourages* UNICEF to further institutionalize strengthening of data gathering to track progress against all MTSP results and indicators;

8. *Requests* UNICEF to include in the next annual report key challenges on the programmatic, organizational and financial level under each focus area, and to include a section reporting on specific results and resources related to major global partnerships, as well as an annually updated data companion.

Annual session
7 June 2007

2007/7. The organizational review of UNICEF

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the UNICEF initiative in undertaking an organizational review to continue to improve the strategic impact of UNICEF;

2. *Requests* the Executive Director to submit for consideration and decision by the Executive Board the changes proposed to be made through the organizational review; and in this regard requests the Executive Director to submit at the second regular session of the Executive Board in September 2007 a report that includes:

(a) details of the proposed organizational review, including the impact on the UNICEF presence in the field at the country and regional levels and the timeframes envisaged for the implementation of the proposed changes;

(b) the rationale for each of the proposed changes;

(c) a clear explanation of the implications on the biennial support budget for 2008-2009 of the implementation of changes as a result of the review;

(d) a summary of the areas where proposed reforms are still being considered.

Annual session
7 June 2007

2007/8. The UNICEF education strategy in support of the medium-term strategic plan

The Executive Board

1. *Reaffirms* the medium-term strategic plan for 2006-2009 (MTSP) as the guiding framework for all areas of UNICEF programming;

2. *Welcomes* the 'UNICEF education strategy' (E/ICEF/2007/10) as the support document for programmes in support of education, and in implementation of the MTSP and its cross-cutting strategies, as well as for achieving the Millennium Development Goals;

3. *Requests* the Executive Director to ensure that UNICEF increases its efforts to further develop national capacities to improve outcomes as outlined in this support strategy for the MTSP;

4. *Requests* the Executive Director to apply the UNICEF education strategy in the priority countries defined according to the strategy, while ensuring at the same time cooperation in the education field with other countries in support of their national plans and policies;

5. *Requests* the Executive Director to ensure that comments on the UNICEF education strategy by members of the Executive Board at its annual session of 2007 are taken into consideration when implementing programmes of support in the area of education;

6. *Takes note* of the indicators established in the UNICEF education strategy, and requests the Executive Director to ensure consistency and clear links between these indicators and those approved in the MTSP for the education focus area, and that future reports fully track all indicators, where possible.

Annual session
7 June 2007

2007/9. The Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative

The Executive Board

Having considered the document E/ICEF/2007/11 and decision 2007/EB.1/3 of the Executive Board of the World Food Programme (WFP);

1. *Approves* the participation of UNICEF in the Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative (ECHUI), including its work plan and secretariat as described in E/ICEF/2007/11;

2. *Urges* the Executive Director to ensure that the medium-term strategic plan (MTSP), including its cross-cutting strategies and support strategies, is the guiding strategic and financial framework for all of UNICEF partnerships, including ECHUI;

3. *Takes note of* the report of the Executive Director and in this regard, approves the allocation of up to $1 million of resources to fund the joint secretariat for this Initiative from core resources in the absence of other resources to fund the secretariat.

4. *Requests* the Executive Director to submit at the annual session of the Executive Board in June 2008 a report on the implementation of the Initiative including among others a description of:

(a) the Initiative's implications on the allocation by UNICEF of financial and human resources at global and country level;

as well as, in consultation with WFP and other partners,

(b) the involvement and ownership of national Governments in the implementation of the Initiative;

(c) an overview of the resources mobilized for the implementation of the Initiative;

(d) the linkages between the implementation of the Initiative and the Common Country Assessment, United Nations Development Assistance Framework and poverty reduction strategy processes;

(e) the results of this Initiative, including the work of the secretariat.

Annual session
7 June 2007

2007/10. Country programme documents

The Executive Board

Approves the aggregate indicative budgets for the following country programmes of cooperation:

Region/country	*Period*	*Regular resources*	*Other resources*	*Document E/ICEF/2007/*
Eastern and Southern Africa				
Comoros	2008-2012	3 715 000	6 250 000	P/L.2
Malawi	2008-2011	30 144 000	94 032 000	P/L.3
Burundi	2008	6 973 000	7 930 000	P/L.4
West and Central Africa				
Cameroon	2008-2012	17 660 000	35 000 000	P/L.5
Guinea-Bissau	2008-2012	8 225 000	18 000 000	P/L.7
Mali	2008-2012	59 840 000	66 647 000	P/L.8
Sierra Leone	2008-2010	19 473 000	36 000 000	P/L.9
Côte d'Ivoire	2008	4 903 000	15 000 000	P/L.10
Niger	2008	14 354 000	15 000 000	P/L.11
Nigeria	2008	29 303 000	49 000 000	P/L.12
Latin America and the Caribbean				
Bolivia	2008-2012	6 470 000	66 000 000	P/L.13
Cuba	2008-2012	3 160 000	6 000 000	P/L.14
Eastern Caribbean multi-country programme, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago	2008-2011	12 800 000	20 000 000	P/L.15
East Asia and the Pacific				
Malaysia	2008-2010	1 500 000	4 500 000	P/L.16
Papua New Guinea	2008-2012	7 150 000	45 000 000	P/L.17
Timor-Leste	2008	1 125 000	10 000 000	P/L.18
South Asia				
Bhutan	2008-2012	4 830 000	15 000 000	P/L.19
India	2008-2012	162 900 000	350 000 000	P/L.20
Maldives	2008-2010	2 202 000	3 000 000	P/L.21
Sri Lanka	2008-2012	4 000 000	35 000 000	P/L.22
Middle East and North Africa				
Djibouti	2008-2012	3 950 000	9 000 000	P/L.23
Jordan	2008-2012	3 335 000	6 000 000	P/L.24
Palestinian children and woman in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Occupied Palestinian Territory	2008-2009	8 000 000	24 900 000	P/L.25
Lebanon	2008	616 000	5 000 000	P/L.26
Sudan	2008	7 649 000	70 000 000	P/L.27

Annual session
7 June 2007

2007/11. Recommendation for additional other resources for approved country programmes

The Executive Board

Approves the other resources ceilings for the approved country programmes for the 36 countries listed in table 1 and the intercountry programmes listed in table 2 of document E/ICEF/2007/P/L.28 for the remaining periods of these programmes, subject to the availability of other resources contributions.

Annual session
7 June 2007

2007/12. Draft country programme documents

The Executive Board

Approves the aggregate indicative budget for the following country programmes of cooperation:

Region/country	*Period*	*Regular resources*		*Other resources*		*Document E/ICEF/2007/*
Eastern and Southern Africa						
Lesotho	2008-2012	5 170 000		30 000 000		P/L.36
Madagascar	2008-2011	34 892 000		35 200 000		P/L.37
Rwanda	2008-2012	39 375 000		67 000 000		P/L.38
Somalia	2008-2009	16 930 000		48 000 000		P/L.39
Botswana	2008-2009	1 260 000		4 000 000		P/L.40
West and Central Africa						
Democratic Republic of the Congo	2008-2012	190 290 000		265 000 000		P/L.41
Equatorial Guinea	2008-2012	3 680 000		3 395 000		P/L.6
Liberia	2008-2012	18 850 000		37 500 000		P/L.42
Togo	2008-2012	16 050 000		27 013 000		P/L.43
The Americas and the Caribbean						
Colombia	2008-2012	4 450 000		30 000 000		P/L.44
Costa Rica	2008-2012	3 000 000		2 000 000		P/L.45
Mexico	2008-2012	3 140 000		19 500 000		P/L.46
Nicaragua	2008-2012	4 160 000		26 345 000		P/L.47
Venezuela	2008	600 000		1 890 000		P/L.48
"Proinclusion" subregional programme	2008-2012	-		44 500 000		P/L.49
Haiti	2008	3 024 000		12 200 000		P/L.50
East Asia and the Pacific						
Pacific Island countries	2008-2012	27 500 000		33 000 000		P/L.51
South Asia						
Nepal	2008-2010	20 214 000		48 000 000		P/L.52

Second regular session
7 September 2007

2007/13. Recommendation for funds to cover overexpenditures for completed projects financed by other resources

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the report on the recommendation for funds to cover overexpenditures for completed projects financed by other resources (E/ICEF/2007/P/L.53);

2. *Welcomes* the measures UNICEF has taken to date and *encourages* UNICEF to continue to strengthen its financial mechanisms, procedures and systems for project implementation in order to avoid expending in excess of commitments, through the rigorous application of financial management policy and procedures, the improvement of programme and financial management systems, and the communication and monitoring of accountabilities for programme implementation;

3. *Approves* the regular resource funding to cover expenditures in excess of commitments, totalling $7,137,112, as contained in document E/ICEF/2007/P/L.53.

Second regular session
7 September 2007

2007/14. Recommendation for approval of additional regular resources for approved country programmes

The Executive Board

A*pproves* a total of $53,844,551 in regular resources to fund the approved country programmes of 12 countries for 2008, as shown in document E/ICEF/2007/P/L.54, whose regular resources planning levels, based on the modified allocation system and estimated global levels of programmable regular resources, are higher than the balance of approved funds for these countries.

Second regular session
7 September 2007

2007/15. Organizational Review of UNICEF

The Executive Board

1. *Welcomes* the presentation on the Organizational Review of UNICEF, in response to decision 2007/7 of the Executive Board;

2. *Reaffirms* the medium-term strategic plan for 2006-2009 (MTSP) as the guiding framework for UNICEF, and recognizes that the aim of the Organizational Review is to help further enhance the UNICEF capacity to deliver, in line with the MTSP;

3. *Notes* that some elements of the Organizational Review might have implications for the biennial support budget (2008-2009) which the Executive Board will consider at its first regular session in January 2008;

4. *Welcomes* that the Executive Director will regularly inform the Executive Board on progress on implementation and impact of measures planned and taken in response to the Organizational Review,

including, but not only, in conjunction with the Executive Director's annual reports, and *requests* the Executive Director to consult the Executive Board, as appropriate, on these measures.

Second regular session
7 September 2007

2007/16. Medium-term strategic plan: planned financial estimates for 2007-2010

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the planned financial estimates (E/ICEF/2007/AB/L.4) as a flexible framework for supporting UNICEF programmes;

2. *Approves* the framework of planned financial estimates for 2007-2010 and *approves* the preparation of programme expenditure submissions to the Executive Board of up to $1,652 million from regular resources in 2008, subject to the availability of resources and the continued validity of these planned financial estimates;

3. *Approves* the exceptional increase of $30 million in the annual transfer to the reserve for after-service health insurance in 2007, and *requests* UNICEF, in cooperation with other relevant United Nations bodies, to undertake an updated actuarial study of the after-service health insurance liability, to be presented to the Executive Board at the second regular session of 2008 in conjunction with the planned financial estimates for 2008-2011.

Second regular session
7 September 2007

2007/17. Internal audit

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note of* the UNICEF report on internal audit activities in 2006 (E/ICEF/2007/AB/L.8) and of the status report on implementation of Executive Board decision 2007/3 on the recommendations of the Board of Auditors (E/ICEF/2007/AB/L.7);

2. *Welcomes* the increased attention of the internal audit report to key and recurrent management issues and the clarity and format of the report and urges UNICEF to ensure that recurring audit issues are explicitly addressed in ongoing efforts to strengthen risk management practices, control and governance processes;

3. Also *welcomes* the follow-up by the management of UNICEF as stated in the management response (E/ICEF/2007/AB/L.9) that would diminish risks for the organization, and *urges* UNICEF to: (a) execute the proposed measures; (b) provide sufficient funding for their execution; and (c) report on the results of those measures in the management response to the annual report on internal audit in 2008;

4. *Takes note* of the analysis of the Office of Internal Audit regarding the necessity of additional resources to assure its sufficient audit capacity;

5. *Expresses* its continuing support for strengthening the UNICEF accountability and assurance processes; and *stresses* that the continuous improvement of audit reporting and management responses can provide increased assurance of the effectiveness of the organization's internal controls.

Second regular session
7 September 2007

2007/18. Programme of work for Executive Board sessions in 2008

The Executive Board

1. *Adopts* the following programme of work for Executive Board sessions in 2008, subject to revisions as appropriate during the year:

First regular session **29 January-1 February** **(4 days)**	**Annual session** **27-30 May** **(4 days)**	**Second regular session** **15-19 September** **(3 days during above period)**
ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS ▪ Election of the officers of the Executive Board ▪ Tentative programme for 2008 annual session	**ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS** ▪ Tentative programme for 2008 second regular session	**ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS** ▪ Programme of work for Executive Board in 2009
PROGRAMME AND POLICY MATTERS ▪ Annual report of the Executive Director to the Economic and Social Council ▪ Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit of interest to UNICEF ▪ Approval of revised country programme documents (CPDs) ▪ UNICEF evaluation policy ▪ UNICEF child protection strategy ▪ Update on children in armed conflict	**PROGRAMME AND POLICY MATTERS** ▪ Annual report of the Executive Director: progress and achievements against the medium-term strategic plan ▪ Proposals for UNICEF programme cooperation ▪ Review of partnerships	**PROGRAMME AND POLICY MATTERS** ▪ Proposals for UNICEF programme cooperation ▪ Midterm reviews and major evaluations ▪ Review of the criteria for resource allocation for country programmes ▪ Decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council at its 2008 substantive session: oral report

including, but not only, in conjunction with the Executive Director's annual reports, and *requests* the Executive Director to consult the Executive Board, as appropriate, on these measures.

Second regular session
7 September 2007

2007/16. Medium-term strategic plan: planned financial estimates for 2007-2010

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the planned financial estimates (E/ICEF/2007/AB/L.4) as a flexible framework for supporting UNICEF programmes;

2. *Approves* the framework of planned financial estimates for 2007-2010 and *approves* the preparation of programme expenditure submissions to the Executive Board of up to $1,652 million from regular resources in 2008, subject to the availability of resources and the continued validity of these planned financial estimates;

3. *Approves* the exceptional increase of $30 million in the annual transfer to the reserve for after-service health insurance in 2007, and *requests* UNICEF, in cooperation with other relevant United Nations bodies, to undertake an updated actuarial study of the after-service health insurance liability, to be presented to the Executive Board at the second regular session of 2008 in conjunction with the planned financial estimates for 2008-2011.

Second regular session
7 September 2007

2007/17. Internal audit

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note of* the UNICEF report on internal audit activities in 2006 (E/ICEF/2007/AB/L.8) and of the status report on implementation of Executive Board decision 2007/3 on the recommendations of the Board of Auditors (E/ICEF/2007/AB/L.7);

2. *Welcomes* the increased attention of the internal audit report to key and recurrent management issues and the clarity and format of the report and urges UNICEF to ensure that recurring audit issues are explicitly addressed in ongoing efforts to strengthen risk management practices, control and governance processes;

3. Also w*elcomes* the follow-up by the management of UNICEF as stated in the management response (E/ICEF/2007/AB/L.9) that would diminish risks for the organization, and *urges* UNICEF to: (a) execute the proposed measures; (b) provide sufficient funding for their execution; and (c) report on the results of those measures in the management response to the annual report on internal audit in 2008;

4. *Takes note* of the analysis of the Office of Internal Audit regarding the necessity of additional resources to assure its sufficient audit capacity;

5. *Expresses* its continuing support for strengthening the UNICEF accountability and assurance processes; and *stresses* that the continuous improvement of audit reporting and management responses can provide increased assurance of the effectiveness of the organization's internal controls.

Second regular session
7 September 2007

2007/18. Programme of work for Executive Board sessions in 2008

The Executive Board

1. *Adopts* the following programme of work for Executive Board sessions in 2008, subject to revisions as appropriate during the year:

First regular session **29 January-1 February** **(4 days)**	**Annual session** **27-30 May** **(4 days)**	**Second regular session** **15-19 September** **(3 days during above period)**
ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS ▪ Election of the officers of the Executive Board ▪ Tentative programme for 2008 annual session	**ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS** ▪ Tentative programme for 2008 second regular session	**ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS** ▪ Programme of work for Executive Board in 2009
PROGRAMME AND POLICY MATTERS ▪ Annual report of the Executive Director to the Economic and Social Council ▪ Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit of interest to UNICEF ▪ Approval of revised country programme documents (CPDs) ▪ UNICEF evaluation policy ▪ UNICEF child protection strategy ▪ Update on children in armed conflict	**PROGRAMME AND POLICY MATTERS** ▪ Annual report of the Executive Director: progress and achievements against the medium-term strategic plan ▪ Proposals for UNICEF programme cooperation ▪ Review of partnerships	**PROGRAMME AND POLICY MATTERS** ▪ Proposals for UNICEF programme cooperation ▪ Midterm reviews and major evaluations ▪ Review of the criteria for resource allocation for country programmes ▪ Decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council at its 2008 substantive session: oral report

RESOURCE, FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS ▪ Biennial support budget for 2008-2009 (with ACABQ report) ▪ Intercountry programmes ▪ Private Sector Division workplan and proposed budget for 2008 ▪ Pledging event	**RESOURCE, FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS**	**RESOURCE, FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS** ▪ Financial reports ▪ Report to the United Nations Board of Auditors and ACABQ ▪ Status report on the progress towards harmonization on cost recovery ▪ Report on internal audit activities in 2007
ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS	**ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS** ▪ Address by the UNICEF Global Staff Association	**ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**
OTHER MATTERS	**OTHER MATTERS**	**OTHER MATTERS**
Joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP **25 and 28 January**		

Second regular session
7 September 2007

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